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A HISTORY OF ENGLAND

WILLIAM III TO WATERLOO

1689-1815

BOOKS BY CYRIL E. ROBINSON

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A HISTORY OF ENGLAND

WILLIAM III TO WATERLOO
1689-1815

BY
CYRIL E. ROBINSON

ASSISTANT MASTER AT WINCHESTER COLLEGE

WITH TWENTY MAPS AND PLANS



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PREFACE

THIS book pursues three aims which are, or should be, the aims of every History book, great or small: First, to stir interest and appreciation, for without that all study of the past is dead and labour lost; Second, to provide material for some real understanding of historic issues, for without an inquiry into origins and motives such study can leave no permanent mark upon the mind; Third (and for beginners this is not the least important of the three) to print upon the memory a clear and decisive picture of the major facts.

For this last purpose it is, as I think, essential that the facts themselves should be few and simple. Selection is not easy, but to suppress the host of minor characters and irrelevant side-issues seems on the whole a wiser course than to blur the picture or produce confusion in the mind; and, if I have erred in omitting too much, it is to avoid the commoner fault of omitting too little. As a further aid to memory, the main facts of every chapter are set down in summarised form at the end of the book. It would not be amiss if these summaries were learnt, so far as possible, by heart. By strict memorisation only can a firm foundation be laid. Too often progress flags for want of it; and a course of history leaves but a vague and inaccurate impression after the lapse of six months' time.

But, if it is valuable to learn the main facts by heart, much more is it valuable to understand them. The memory of them will gain rather than lose by ample illustration and discussion. Here, therefore, there is no excuse for economy of detail; and what space has been gained by the suppression of smaller issues may usefully be given to a more generous treatment of the large. Detail is of two sorts, or rather may serve a double purpose. It supplies the means to a completer judgment, discovers the springs of human character and action, reveals the concrete beginnings from which great historical movements have been born. But, besides this, there is another gain. Detail clothes the dry bones of fact with the warm substance of reality. It will make even the dull tale live; and the trifling gossip of a Froissart or a Pepys stirs in us an interest which the vague generalisations of a text-book fail to move. Such details will not confuse the main impressions but rather strengthen them; and so, wherever an episode seems worth mentioning at all, I have tried within the limits of my space to tell it properly.

From this it follows that, though some of the chapters are moderately long, much of their matter will make easy reading. As will be seen, they cover on the average fourteen pages each. Each is intended to form an allowance suited to an hour's work of preparation; and each forms in some real sense a separate and connected whole. Nothing perhaps is more destructive of a learner's interest and appreciation than to break off his reading in the middle of a chapter, or to take it up again at some purely artificial and arbitrary date. Each of the four Parts is to be composed of, roughly,

eighteen chapters, or portions, of this length. It should therefore be possible to treat each Part as matter for one term's work. The summaries above mentioned should certainly do something to reduce the irksome necessity for taking "notes," and, in this way, should make it possible to cover wider ground.

The Maps and Diagrams have been designed upon the same principle of selection as the matter of the text. All superfluous names have been suppressed, and only those places given which are strictly relevant to the contents of the chapter. They should, therefore, be as closely observed and "memorised" with almost as much care as the very facts themselves.

Finally, I should wish to say a word of acknowledgment and gratitude to the kindly criticism and suggestion which I have received from Mr. A. T. P. Williams, Historical Tutor and Second Master of Winchester College. This book makes no pretence at putting forward theories that are novel or original; but, thanks to Mr. Williams' aid, I hope that it will contain none at least which are now disproven or inaccurate.

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READING LIST

THE following is a list of books suitable for the use of students who wish to enlarge or to deepen their knowledge of any particular branch or period of English history. As the list is intended for students rather than for their teachers, I have tried to select such books as are not only within the grasp of youthful readers, but also calculated to arouse their interest. Among them, therefore, I have included many novels which, while illustrative of some phase or other of English life, have no claim to rank as authentic history.

I have marked with an asterisk (*) books specially to be recommended to younger readers and with a dagger (†) those likely to be of special interest to their seniors.

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READING LIST

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A HISTORY OF ENGLAND

WILLIAM III TO WATERLOO

CHAPTER I

WILLIAM THE THIRD AND ENGLAND

THE present chapter is probably the last which will bear for its title-head the name of an English ruling sovereign; and for this the reason is not far to seek. The Revolution which turned out James and brought in William was a revolution in a true and literal sense; for by it the whole system of English Government was changed. 1689 is a year which divides the centuries. It witnessed the break-up of a historic system; it saw the old English monarchy pass definitely away; and in the two hundred years and more which have followed the ruling sovereign has ceased in any real sense to rule. England had been more fortunate than most countries in her ancient kings; and on the whole they had served her interest well. From the usurpation of the Norman Conqueror down to the accession of the House of Stuart there had been perhaps no more than three among them—Stephen, Henry III., and Henry VI.—who had been altogether men of straw. The rest, whatever their weaknesses and vices, or whatever the perversity of their ambitions, had at any rate been leaders. They had ruled strongly, though often selfishly, and the history of the country which they governed had been largely moulded by the impress of their characters and acts. But such heritage of power as they bequeathed, the Stuart

kings frittered foolishly away. Lacking the ability to lead they took refuge in a theory—the theory which now held France and the rest of Europe in its grip—that God had not made kings for the people's benefit, but the people for the king's. The English people, however, decreed otherwise. By the "Glorious Revolution" of 1689 the two rôles were interchanged, and it was henceforth determined that, if kings ruled at all in England, they should rule as servants of the people's will. The solid realities of the crown's power were done away for ever, and only the husk and appearances were suffered to remain. Thus, while the armed forces of the country were still in name his Majesty's army and his Majesty's fleet, yet in practice his Majesty could not command the movement of a single regiment or a single ship of war for his own purposes and against the people's will. The ministers again were still in theory his Majesty's ministers, but they were no longer answerable to him alone; and the days were coming when he would cease to sit among them at their council-board or even to exercise his veto over their policies and acts. The pomp and circumstance of outward show still clung around his person; and he enjoyed still the hollow splendour of a gilded court. But the true glory had departed. The king remained only as a visible symbol of an authority which had passed from his hands into the hands of others; and it became the duty of a well-conducted monarch (like that of well-conducted little boys) to be seen, indeed, but seldom or never heard.

Though it needed time to develop this new theory of kingship, and though the king's power was not all lost in a day, the real change certainly began when William took the crown. For he took it only by the consent and by the express invitation of Parliament, and the terms on which he took it were very strictly and definitely laid down in what was called the Declaration of Rights. Very far indeed have we travelled since the days when sixty years before a humble *Petition of Rights* was presented to King Charles. It was now no longer a question of petition or

request. Parliament was in a position to dictate, and it *declared* without equivocation what rights belonged to Parliament and might under no circumstance be assumed by king or queen. Parliament was henceforth to be regularly summoned; its laws were no more to be suspended or dispensed (as James had done); without its leave no standing army was to be raised (as also James had done); without its vote no taxes, custom-dues or loans enforced. In short, whatever illegal powers the Stuart sovereigns had hitherto assumed were now to be discontinued one and all. Nevertheless, controlled though he was and hedged about by these limitations and conditions, William himself was no mere puppet king. England was not as yet fully prepared for governing herself; and in this difficult period of transition a strong hand was still needed at the helm. So for all that he was a foreign interloper William attained a mastery in English politics infinitely greater than has fallen to the lot of any sovereign since. There were two special reasons for his unique ascendancy. In the first place, when William came to the throne the country was still in a most unsettled state. The tranquil interplay of party politics, as we understand them nowadays, was not then understood. The two opposing factions, the Tories and the Whigs, were then antagonists in real and deadly earnest, not polite rivals in the peaceful game of Parliamentary see-saw. The Whigs, if given their way, would have driven the Tories out of public life and clapped the more prominent and dangerous into prison; and the Tories on their part would have desired nothing better than to do the same for the Whigs. They were like two quarrelsome dogs, eager to resume the interrupted fight of yesterday; and it was only William, standing impartially between them, who could keep them from flying at each other's throats. Snarl and bicker as they might, it was his business to keep a tight hold upon the leash; and, as time went on, they themselves came to realise that, however disagreeable, his restraint was good. The country's peace and safety could only be preserved by the ascendancy and self-assertion of the King. Nor, in the second place,

was William unfitted by character and training for this arduous task. He was no ordinary man; and his life had been no ordinary life. In the past he had suffered much; he was troubled from childhood by a distressing asthma; he was seldom or never well; and, besides this, his nerves had been strained almost beyond endurance by the burden of his great responsibilities. For sixteen years he had ruled Holland under the shadow of a great fear. France, her big neighbour, had been watching her, as a cat watches a mouse, ready to spring; and in the long struggles with enemies without and treachery within her Prince had grown prematurely old. The summons to England at the age of thirty-nine found him, if not embittered, at anyrate suspicious, taciturn and morose. With his cold unsympathetic manner, his reticence of speech, and his dislike of all conviviality and cheerful sport, he won but little affection; but he at least commanded obedience and respect. The long discipline of his hard life, which had taught him to be master of his own feelings, had made him also a master over others. Strong-minded, domineering sovereigns England has had in plenty, but none perhaps so completely certain of themselves as this grim, careworn, self-contained, heroic invalid from Holland. William was not content, and circumstance did not allow him, merely to sit silent and ornamental on the throne. He not merely reigned, but ruled.

Like Cromwell, the first task which William had to face was the suppression of the Stuart king's partisans in Scotland and in Ireland. In Scotland the affair was brief. The cause of the Stuarts was still popular among the Highlands; and the mantle of Montrose had fallen upon a great clan-leader, John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee. Seeing that the Presbyterians of the south, their traditional opponents, had already declared allegiance to the new Dutch king, Dundee and his followers were doubly eager to come out for James, and in the late spring of 1689 they rose. The loyal regiments under General Hugh Mackay were marched up north against them; and on entering the wild and rugged pass of Killiecrankie they ran into the foe.

The impetuous Celts bore down in a furious charge which carried all before them; and it was only the work of a moment before Mackay's regiments were running for dear life over the heather from the deadly sweep of the claymores. But in the very hour of his victory Dundee was himself mortally wounded, hit, so they say, by a silver button fired in place of a bullet from some random gun; and the Highlanders, losing their leader, lost heart and all cohesion. Many dispersed to their homes; and the rest were very soon worn down by Mackay's tenacity. William, who could afford to be generous, allowed the rebels to make peace on easy terms. A proclamation was issued, offering free pardon to all who should take an oath of their allegiance before the last day of 1691. The oath was taken by nearly all the chiefs, but not quite all. Maclan Macdonald, the aged head of the Macdonalds of Glencoe, was delayed on his journey by a snow-storm, and arrived too late to take the oath by the appointed day. For this unlucky accident he and his clan paid dearly, and the sequel is an ugly blot upon the annals of the Scottish race. Feuds between clans and rival families were still in Scotland of a most violent character. The Highlanders had many bitter foes among the Lowland faction, and chief among them were the Earl of Argyll, head of the great clan Campbell, and John Dalrymple, Master of Stair. Watching their chance to wipe out ancient scores, these two men perceived in the luckless blunder of the old Macdonald a loop-hole for revenge. Stair was at this time the Secretary for Scotland, and he used the influence he had with William to further the design. Making the most of the untaken oath, and suppressing the fact, and cause, of the delay, he prepared an order for the military commander which he got the King to sign. The order ran as follows: "As for Maclan of Glencoe and all that tribe, if they can be well distinguished from the other Highlanders, it will be proper, for the vindication of public justice, to extirpate that set of thieves". On receipt of this order, a strong detachment of red-coats, drawn for the most part from the

Campbell clan, were sent in February of '92 to occupy the wild inhospitable glen among the northern hills. They came in the guise of friendly visitors, and as such they were received, lodged in the houses of the unsuspecting peasants and treated with every mark of hospitality. One early morning, a fortnight later, when the snow was on the ground, the cottagers were startled from their beds by the sound of musketry. MacIan and his family were being murdered in cold blood; and when that was finished the soldiers turned upon the rest. 'There was no quarter offered and no discrimination made. Women and babes in arms were left dead or dying in the door-ways, as the soldiers proceeded in their bloody mission from one cottage to another. When dawn broke, the ground was strewn with corpses; but the greater part of the inhabitants had escaped under cover of the darkness and taken refuge in the hills. There many perished in the deep snow and bitter weather; and when the soldiers had departed and the survivors ventured down at last out of their hiding, it was only to find a heap of charred and smouldering wreckage on the spot where their cottages had stood. Such was the massacre of Glencoe, a hideous example of the clan spirit at its worst, and an act in striking contrast to the habitual clemency of William's methods. William himself cannot be wholly cleared of his responsibility. If he signed the fatal order without knowing what it meant, it was certainly his business to have known; and, though some tardy punishment was meted out to the chief authors of the outrage, no real amends were ever made for the wrong which had been done.

Meanwhile, across the sea in Ireland, a fiercer national resistance had been roused, and a bloodier struggle waged. In '89 James had himself appeared in Dublin with arms and men and money supplied by his obliging cousin, Louis XIV; and the Catholic natives had grasped at the opportunity of turning upon the alien landowners whom Cromwell had set over them. Cut off from succour in an intensely hostile country, the Protestants retired under

cover of the towns. At Londonderry, in the north, they had determined to hold out at whatever cost, remembering, perhaps, the massacre of 1641; and in early April the famous siege began. All through May and June there were fierce bombardments, sallies, and assaults. Then, despairing of open capture, the enemy sat down to a more leisurely blockade. By the middle of July famine was reigning within the walls. Corn was dealt out in the most meagre doles; the horses had been killed for food; and the inhabitants turned, in the extremity of their hunger, to eating dogs, raw hides, and even rats and mice. We are told how one fat citizen was forced to keep his house, so expressive were the sidelong looks which followed him of jealousy, suspicion, or (could it be?) something worse. For, indeed, men had now reached the stage when they would stick at nothing. By the end of July there were no more than two days' rations remaining in the town. Yet all thought of surrender was dismissed—and in point of fact succour was at hand. As the sun set on 30th July, some English supply-ships, which had been hovering for some time in the neighbouring lough, were seen sailing under full canvas up the River Foyle, which flows through the city. A boom had been constructed by the enemy across the fairway of the river, and now this obstacle alone appeared to stand between the besieged and their deliverance. A vessel named the "Mountjoy" led the advancing line, and she went fair and square at the boom, burst it, recoiled at the shock, and stuck fast in the mud. To the straining eyes on Londonderry walls there followed an awful moment of intolerable suspense; but, as the enemy were putting out in boats to board the "Mountjoy," the tide began to rise, lifted her off the mud, and swung her clear. By midnight the whole convoy was safe inside the city, and their precious freight landed on the quay. All night and next day the enemy guns kept up a fierce and continuous bombardment; but it proved their parting shot, and on the first day of August the Irish army was seen streaming away southward. The siege had lasted 105 days. The resistance of Londonderry

had, in fact, preserved the island for King William, who, nearly a twelve month later, appeared in person to defend his rights. Landing at Carrickfergus in the June of 1690, he occupied Belfast, and then marched south on James. The two armies met upon the River Boyne. Both were of the most motley composition. William led regulars from England, and mercenaries or volunteers from every Protestant community in Europe; Dutchmen and Huguenots, Germans, Swedes, and Danes here fought side by side with Englishmen against the allies of their common enemy, the Catholic King of France. James's army, strongly posted as it was on the south bank of the river, was yet no match for such enthusiasts as these. His French infantry fought well, as did the Irish horse; but the Irish foot made no attempt to check the fording of the river, and fled helter-skelter before a blow was struck. To his eternal shame James was not slow to follow their example; and shortly afterwards he re-embarked for France. The collapse of the Rebellion was now certain; and the native Irish were marked down for yet another pitiless revenge. Though pardon had been promised to all who laid down arms, the Protestant landowners resumed their old supremacy, and within a few years their Parliament at Dublin was engaged in grinding the Catholic natives down. It was made impossible for any Catholic to enter public office, to become a doctor or a schoolmaster, or even to inter-marry with a Protestant. The further to increase the land's distress, English jealousy cut off the importation of all Irish cloth; the commercial prosperity of Ulster was thus stifled almost at its birth; and thousands of folk, thrown out of their employment, departed for the colonies out West. For a full century Ireland lay thus, gagged, indigent, and bleeding, until a fresh insurrection in 1798 provoked the abolition of the Irish Parliament, and a new variety of political repression.

While thus engaged in establishing his power over the Irish and the Scots, William had been faced at home with problems of an even more perplexing sort. Straightforward warfare with an open enemy who were the declared parti-

sans of James was for the new King a much more simple matter than the management of English politicians who were avowedly his friends. For, although both Whigs and Tories had assisted in raising him to power, the two factions were bitterly at variance over the use which he should make of it; nor did the policy which either favoured agree by any means with William's own ideas. The fact is that there was a constant struggle between the rival parties to capture the King's ear, and to influence his plans abroad no less then here in England; and, in order to appreciate the course, not of this reign alone, but of many that succeeded it, we must have some clearer understanding of the aims and principles for which Whigs and Tories stood.¹

In the first place, it is important to observe that the leaders of the two factions were not essentially of different rank or class. Both were of the aristocracy, landowners for the most part, men of a similar education and upbringing. The right to sit in Parliament was still reserved for the "gentry," or what we may call the "governing class"; and, whether Whigs or Tories obtained office, neither had the least intention of surrendering their privilege to lesser folk. Thorough-paced democracy was, in fact, a far-off dream in the eighteenth century. The Whigs, however, stood, on the whole, for the cause of liberty. First organised by Shaftesbury to thwart the despotic schemes of Charles II, they had no respect whatever for the "divine authority" of kings. On the contrary, they wished to see Parliament all-powerful and the monarch little better than a figure-head. Then, again, since it was Shaftesbury who had led the first revolt against Charles's Catholic plots, the influence of his followers very naturally depended on the support of the Non-conformist sects, and, out of sympathy for these, they denied the right of the Established Church to tyrannise over men's consciences. Toleration was, therefore, the watch-word of the Whigs. From this it

¹ These political titles took their origin from mere nicknames of abuse or contempt. "Whig" was properly a name given to Scottish hooligans, "Tory" to a class of Irish thieves.

further followed that in foreign politics they were the bitter enemies of Catholic France, and eagerly embraced whatever opportunities arose of trying conclusions with Louis XIV. They were, therefore, William's most staunch supporters in his foreign wars. To these three principles of home and foreign policy the Tories, on the other hand, were diametrically opposed. Owing their position, as they mostly did, to the Royalist Restoration of thirty years before, they had the sense to see that the power and credit of the aristocracy were closely bound up with the power and credit of the King. They were, therefore, ardent and convinced supporters of the Stuart ideal of a monarch, omnipotent and absolute. They had acquiesced, indeed, in the expulsion of the egregious James; but they retained for the Stuart family a lurking sympathy, which was, for the moment, satisfied by seeing James' daughters, Mary and Anne, seated in turn upon the throne. But when, with Anne's death, the throne was once more vacant, many of the Tories would have preferred the return of James's son, the Old Pretender, to the alternative of an alien king from Hanover. For the same reason, too, that they believed in a strong monarchy, the Tories equally believed in a strong official Church. The clergy were their best allies and supporters; the Puritans, their old antagonists in politics and war. The Tories, therefore, were opposed to the toleration of dissenters. Lastly, although they had little sympathy with Catholics in England or abroad, they were not for pressing foreign monarchies too hard; for they saw that to upset the French throne's stability might shake, however indirectly, the English throne's stability as well. The Tories, in short, clung to the traditions of the past, and there was some reason in their policy. For, if her ancient system had made England what she was, it had made the Tories also what they were, a very favoured, privileged, and influential class. Like the Conservatives of to-day, they wished to leave well alone and let things bide. Like the modern Liberals, on the other hand, the Whigs looked forward to the future. They believed in the free development of Par-

liamentary institutions: as being far better for the country than a reaction towards the old régime; and, although in most cases they were selfishly convinced that it was the aristocracy alone which mattered, and the Whig aristocracy alone which understood the art of government, yet unconsciously they paved the way for a genuine democracy. In the long run, it has been the more generous and progressive programme of the Whigs that has made our modern England what she is to-day.

William, who had first crossed the water at the Whigs' request and who owed his settlement upon the throne to a Parliamentary majority of Whigs, was very naturally regarded as their nominee, and by them, at least, expected to behave as such. They meant to have their way with him in all things; and revenge upon their political enemies was their first preliminary demand. For this there was plenty of good precedent. When Charles II returned at the Restoration, he had dealt out rigorous punishment to the men who killed his father. Some who signed the death-warrant had been beheaded; some who, like Cromwell, were already dead, had been exhumed and their remains then brutally gibbeted at Tyburn. The Whigs would now have cheerfully repeated such grim barbarities. There were certainly some Catholics, and perhaps a score or so of Tories, who, in their zeal for James, had overstepped the mark; and, if William had listened to the Whigs, these men would have paid for their indiscretion with their lives. But William did not listen to the Whigs. He was determined, on the contrary, that he at least would not "wade through slaughter to a throne". Even the High Church bishops and other prominent Non-Jurors, who refused to swear the oath of new allegiance, were let off lightly with mere dismissal from their posts; and, when the first Whig Parliament rejected William's Act of Grace promising pardon to all political offenders, he called another Parliament and got a Tory majority to pass it. That was invariably his way. What one party would not do, the other would; and William, who knew quite well what he was after, obtained

support from whichever side would give it. Thus the Whigs, too, served his turn in securing religious toleration for dissenters. By an Act passed in 1689 Englishmen were left free, for the first time in our history, to follow their own consciences. Even the Roman Catholics, though not openly acknowledged, were permitted to carry on their ritual on the sly. Quakers and Non-Conformists generally were no more to be molested. Though still excluded, it is true, from entering public office (since the Test and Corporation Acts were still in force) they were rid at least of interference with their worship and, upon condition of subscribing to a certain minimum of doctrine, their ministers were to be recognised as such. In short, the narrow-minded violence of the last two hundred years was over. An era of liberty and enlightenment began. Under the King's fair-handed government, men learnt that it was possible to live amicably together, however much they differed in matters of politics or faith. Freedom of speech was now assured to them; and anyone who liked could air his views in public without fear of being committed to the Tower. Even the Press was given a licence such as it had never heretofore enjoyed; and many fresh newspapers were started in support of various factions with no censor to ban or to control them. Party politics began to absorb the energy of those who in the past had aimed at revolution or sought to gain their selfish ends by civil war; and, though neither party was wholly loyal to William, neither was openly disloyal. The fact was that the domestic peace men now enjoyed had been too dearly bought and was far too highly valued to be lightly thrown away. If England owed her security to William's own tact and moderation, William himself owed much of his authority to the universal fear of James's return. For across the waters of the Channel the Catholic King was still busy with intrigues; and the other and infinitely more powerful Catholic monarch, at whose court he lay, was ready still to back him. The danger of a Catholic despotism, which England had so narrowly escaped, had not entirely vanished.

Against its menace William was the one indispensable protector; and, when he turned from the problems of home government to plunge once more into the continental struggle and renew his old resistance to the French king's greed, it was the national sense of this impending peril which enabled William to carry his people and his Parliament along with him to war.

CHAPTER II

WILLIAM AND FRANCE

WILLIAM never felt genuinely at home in England. He hated the spite and jealousies of our party-politics. He had little sympathy with the idlers of the court; and his heart was always in reality elsewhere. Himself a Dutchman to the core, he was still—be it remembered—the ruler of the Dutch as well as of the English; and the first place in his thoughts was very naturally reserved for Holland. Nor would he ever have quitted his own people to take an alien crown, had he not realised that only by so doing could he serve their interests best. William's true mission in England was to bring in his new subjects to the succour of his old, and to range the English, if possible, alongside with the Dutch in the struggle against Louis XIV.

How vital and perilous that struggle was, it is hardly necessary to recapitulate. France under Louis was as much the terror of all Europe as Germany has been in our own day. She was already great when some thirty years before Louis had succeeded to the crown. Richelieu's diplomacy had humbled Austria, and so removed her most formidable rival from the field. Mazarin, in his turn, had absorbed the province of Alsace, and thereby extended her eastern frontier to the Rhine. But Louis was not content with what these men had done. He had still further developed and expanded French resources. With the aid of his ministers he had accumulated treasure, organised great armies, built great fleets. Colbert, who, in 1661,

succeeded Mazarin as Chancellor, had laid the foundations of a French colonial empire side by side with ours in the East Indies and in North America. Turenne and Condé, the chief of Louis' Marshals, had been the foremost captains of their age. Vauban, his engineer and the designer of his frontier fortresses, was perhaps the greatest genius that military science had yet produced. With such resources and such servants at his back, Louis might well dream of subjugating Europe. His favourite ambition was to extend his conquests until his eastern frontier marched wholly with the Rhine, and towards this end he shaped his plans. While the Emperor was busy defending Austria against the aggression of the Turks, Louis had seized the key-fortress of Strasbourg, and no amount of argument would make him give it up. But the chief obstacle to his expansion lay further away to the north-east. The Lower Netherlands, still to that day the property of Spain, had partially succumbed to him in '68; but when his efforts in the same direction were renewed in '72, Louis had met his match. The Dutch, scared by his approach so near their frontier, had risen and hurled him back. William himself, as their Stadtholder, had proved the hero of that war; nor had he rested easy with its temporary success. He saw with a clear eye what Louis meant to do; and he made it his mission and life's work to thwart him. Three years before he took the British crown, he had answered the French King's aggressive policy by forming a league of Continental powers. Then, finally, as if to gratify his most cherished dreams, England herself had passed into his hands. Her fighting spirit and her great resources lay now at his command. They were a reinforcement of inestimable value, and perhaps, in many ways, essential to the successful resistance of King Louis' schemes.

That England was now once more the outstanding rival and natural enemy of France was obvious to many besides William; yet not even his shrewd insight could fully understand how much in the future that rivalry would mean.

The truth is that France and England were embarking on a struggle which was to last almost continuously for a century and more. At first the struggle was begun for more or less limited and immediate ends. To save the Netherlands, to check the Catholic excesses of King Louis; and to preserve his own throne from Louis' protégé, King James, William carried a hesitating country into war (1691-1697). In his last year the struggle was resumed, this time to hinder Spain and Spain's possessions from falling into Louis' power; and throughout the reign of Anne the victories of Marlborough slowly brought France and Louis to their knees (1702-1714). There followed five-and-twenty years of peace, and then England was once again at war with France; but now, though strictly waged about an Austrian question, the struggle began to take a wider scope, and fighting spread to far-off continents where French and English settlers were pushing rival claims (1740-1748). In the Seven Years' War which followed shortly after, this new issue was more definitely joined. Colonial Empire was now seen to be the true prize of the great duel. Campaigns were undertaken in three continents and decided, thanks to Chatham's organising genius, in our favour. The Indies and North America became accordingly the dominions of Britain and not France (1756-1763). Not many years were out, however, before France found an opportunity for her revenge in supporting our American colonies in their revolt (1778-1783); but the American war had barely been concluded when the Revolution broke out in France herself, carrying her along strange paths of violence, anarchy, and conquest; so the old issue narrowed down once more to a struggle for the supremacy of Europe. For twenty years (1793-1815) England was fighting desperately for her own existence, no less than for the liberty of mankind. In that last and fiercest phase of the long struggle, in which Napoleon gambled with his country's life-blood for a life conquest of the world, France finally went down. During the one century and a quarter, since William first began it, the two nations had in all been fighting for just on seventy

years; and only then was the age-long contest permanently settled, when the Old Guard fell back from the hill at Waterloo.

From William, however, clear prophet as he was, such future developments were hidden; yet a true instinct told him to pit his whole strength and England's against the strength of France; and, indeed, the events of 1689 left him no other choice. Louis had refused to recognise his accession to the English throne. French troops were being sent to assist the rebel Irish against him. French fleets were sailing the channel in support of his open enemy, King James. England herself seemed threatened with invasion. It was a challenge which William, even had he wished it, could not possibly refuse; as it was, he welcomed it with open arms. Already, while still upon the continent, he had formed a powerful combination against France; and he could now count upon assistance from well-nigh every Protestant state in Europe. Besides Holland, Hanover and Brandenburg in Germany and Savoy in southern France were all involved. Even the Austrian Emperor and the King of Spain, though Catholics, were eager to lend a hand in humbling France. England's adherence set, as it were, a "coping-stone" to this Grand Alliance; and the dearest wish of William's heart was granted, when in the spring of 1690 the declaration of war was formally approved by Parliament. "This," he exclaimed with a strange vehemence of emotion, "is indeed the first day of my reign."

Nevertheless, for two years William's hands were full with the campaign in Ireland; and he was forced to content himself, as best he might, with challenging the French supremacy by sea. In 1690 the Dutch and English fleets, under Lord Torrington's command, had fought the French Admiral de Tourville off the cliffs of Beachy Head. They were under strict orders to engage; but the balance of numbers was against them; de Tourville was the most skilful captain of his age, and Torrington was wise enough to run for it and so narrowly escape a worse disaster. For

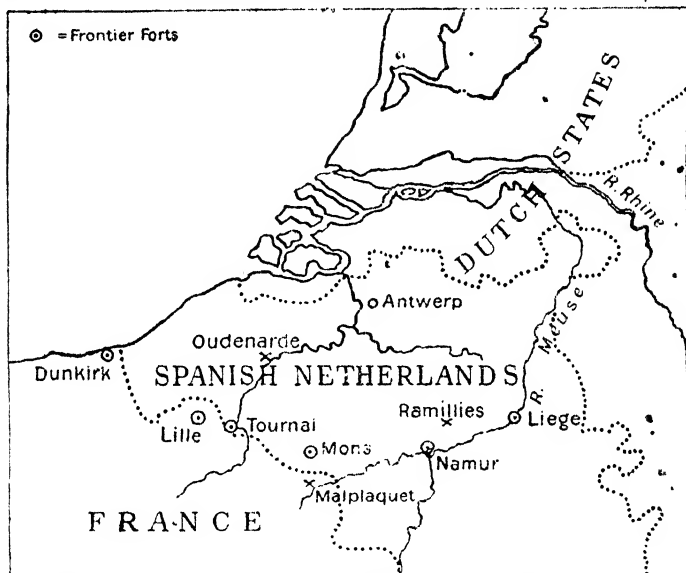
this he was court-martialled and employed no more; but English honour was redeemed in 1692 by Lord Russell, his successor. Invasion was threatening at the moment; an army was actually waiting to embark; and de Tourville was hanging, weather-bound, off Cape La Hogue. When, however, the Dutch and English fleets swept down on him in far superior numbers, he was forced, in his turn, to beat a swift retreat. Most of his vessels effected their escape through the treacherous currents of the Channel Isles; but some dozen of the heavier French ships were driven into port and burnt ignominiously by crews from English boats. London was illuminated and beflagged in honour of this triumph, and not without good cause. The victory of La Hogue decided, at any rate, the mastery of the channel. Henceforward the French fleet scarcely dared to show its nose; and, during the subsequent campaigns abroad, it was of vital consequence to William (and equally to Marlborough) that the passage of our military transports went altogether free from molestation.

For, already, the war across the channel had now been taken up in earnest. The Battle of the Boyne had ended William's anxieties for Ireland; his troops were thus set free for foreign service, and within six months he himself had crossed with a formidable contingent to the main scene of action in the Netherlands. Not for the first time, nor for the last, in history, these bleak and sodden flats were to form the cock-pit of long and wearisome campaigns. The events of the Great War have made us all familiar with the topography of Flanders, but a word of explanation may perhaps be needed. Between France upon the south and Holland on the Rhine mouth to the north lay what was then the Spanish Netherlands, forming, like a modern Belgium, a sort of buffer state between the two. The southern frontier of this Spanish Province was now to be the chief object of dispute. The French had long since been nibbling at it, and each fresh advance was regarded with the gravest alarm by the Dutch nation, seeing that it stood to their own less tenable defences as a forward out-

post line. Its boundary ran from Dunkirk upon the coast through Lille, Tournai, and Mons to Luxemburg. These towns were then all strongly fortified; and the fortune of campaigns inevitably hung on their capture or their loss. So the tide of war flowed constantly around them, leaving them, after siege and counter siege, first with one and then with the other of the combatants in turn. The first blow, struck in 1691, came from the side of France; for, pressed though he was upon three other frontiers, Louis disdained to stand on his defence in Flanders. He led an army in person to besiege the walled town of Mons, and, though William made a tardy dash to save it, succeeded in forcing its capitulation under the very eyes of the army of relief. Next year another forward step was taken, and another key-fortress at Namur, which guards the junction of the Sambre and the Meuse, suffered in its turn the fate of Mons. Meanwhile more than one bloody battle was fought in open field; and in these William, who was no skilled strategist, invariably came off second best. But with his habitual perseverance he refused to admit himself beaten and stuck grimly to his task, a task which was not a little lightened by the strain imposed on the French army in other theatres of war. Such pertinacity was finally rewarded. In 1695 William succeeded in recovering Namur, and it now became evident to Louis that decisive victory lay beyond his reach. The staunch defence of the confederate armies, and not least the splendid fighting of the British contingent formed and trained by William, had upset all calculations; and in 1697 the French King welcomed an opportunity for making peace. By the so-called Treaty of Ryswick, he agreed to give up his hold on Lorraine and Luxemburg, retaining from all his conquests of the last twenty years the Rhine-town of Strasbourg only. It was a severe check to his ambitions; but, however humbled, Louis was far from beaten. He had fought the rest of Europe single-handed. His strength had proved unequal to the task. That was all. His dreams of conquest had not for one moment been abandoned, and, though forced for the time being to draw

in his horns, he meant, when a better opportunity arose, to try again.

To William himself the peace brought with it one important personal advantage. By the terms of the treaty Louis foreswore his championship of James, and officially acknowledged the Dutchman as the rightful King of England. Such recognition was particularly welcome, since it



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE CAMPAIGNS OF WILLIAM III
AND MARLBOROUGH.

came at a moment when William's influence in English politics was on the wane. In 1694 his wife, Queen Mary, daughter of James, had died; and her death snapped the bond which alone had hitherto guaranteed the loyalty of malcontents. The Tories had agreed to accept William because he had a Stuart wife; so long as the Stuart wife was living, she gave her husband some indirect title to the English crown. But with her death William became once

more, in the eyes of the pro-Stuart party, a mere foreign interloper; and only the fact that Mary's sister Anne remained his inevitable heir availed to make his presence tolerable at all. Thus relations grew more strained; and even the advent of peace did nothing to better the position. On the contrary, men who had rallied, as men will, to meet a common danger and who had previously supported war-like measures against France, now began to fall away. The man who had been a hero while there was fighting to be done was subjected once more, as soon as it was over, to all the mean antagonisms of party spite. William became intensely unpopular; and his popularity was only to be recovered at a terrible cost—a cost from which he himself would have been the first to shrink—the re-opening of the war. For the peace procured at Ryswick proved but a brief truce. Within four years France and England were again at odds. The buffets of unfriendly fortune, which William had so long and so heroically endured, gave him no respite as his end drew on. The very stars in their courses appeared to fight against him; and, in his last year, there arose a situation which seemed to render vain his whole life's labour and shatter in a twinkling all his dreams.

For that old fox Louis had been waiting for his chance; and now that chance had come, a chance to accomplish his designs and more than his designs through the freakish action of an invalid king. History is made and destiny directed by such queer occurrences; and this (had it succeeded) would have made Louis master of two-thirds of Europe and destroyed the Balance of Power for evermore. The circumstances which led to it were these. The King of Spain, Carlos by name, was from birth a weakling, now prematurely old, and likely at any moment to be found dead in his bed. This Carlos had no children, and there was, therefore, no direct heir to all his vast possessions. Carlos had, however, two sisters. One, Maria Theresa, whom for the sake of clearness we may call the *French sister*, had been married to Louis XIV.

himself. The other, Margaret, whom we may call the *Austrian sister*, had been married to the Emperor Leopold of Austria. To the descendant of one or other of these sisters must needs pass on Carlos' death the whole heritage of Spain; and the all-important question was to which. Now it was clearly undesirable for every reason that the Spanish crown should pass into Louis' family; for, in that case, Spain and France might sooner or later become united in one kingdom—a terrible event to contemplate. In 1698 William had accordingly concluded with Louis an agreement by which the main bulk of the Spanish King's domains was to go to a descendent of the *Austrian sister* Margaret. The heir selected from the Austrian house was the grandson of Leopold and Margaret, a *baby prince named Joseph*, already heir in his own right to the Bavarian throne. So far, so good; but the baby Joseph proved a broken reed. He died of smallpox in 1699; and there was all William's work to be done again. Negotiations with Louis were at once renewed; and a second Partition Treaty was devised. This time the prince selected from the Austrian House was a more important personage, to wit the *Archduke Charles*. Charles was the younger son of the Emperor himself, not indeed by the "*Austrian sister*" Margaret, but by another wife. Being a younger son he had no immediate prospect of succeeding his father on the Austrian throne; and to him, accordingly, Louis agreed that Spain itself might go, stipulating merely that by way of compensation his own family should receive the two Spanish dependencies of Naples and Milan. Having agreed to this William breathed again, thankful that Spain at any rate was not to be merged in France.

In all this haggling, however, there was one important person who had been allowed no voice. Carlos of Spain, half-idiot as he was, had still the spirit to resent such interference, and he did not by any means appreciate the care with which these two comparative outsiders were arranging for the disposition of his lands. When news of the Partition Treaties reached him, he flew into a paroxysm of rage,

and, while his wife wreaked her annoyance on the bedroom furniture, he consoled himself by vowing to upset their well-laid plan. The diplomatic bargain which William and Louis had struck up was certainly a little premature. Carlos was not dead yet; and, while he lived, he still had power at least to make a will. Perhaps after all he was not quite so mad as they had thought; and so in fact it proved when, shortly after, his death so long expected came to pass. His will was duly opened, and behold his entire possessions bodily bequeathed, not to any member of the Austrian house at all, but to a prince of Louis' line! The heir named in the will was in fact the "French sister's" and Louis' grandson, *Philip of Anjou*. Here was for William a bolt out of the blue. The Partition Treaties from that moment were mere useless scraps of paper, and Louis' past promises went to the winds. What else could be expected? To see his own grandson crowned the King of Spain exceeded the summit of Louis' wildest dreams. True, Carlos had made the stipulation in advance that the French and Spanish crowns should never be combined, and that to this end Philip should renounce all title whatsoever to his grandfather's domains.¹ But little value at the best would such a pledge have been; and Louis saw clearly that, pledge or no pledge, Spain and her possessions were delivered over into his hands. Consider for a moment what this meant. With Spain herself went not merely her colonies in South America, but, in Europe, Sicily, Naples, Milan, and, perhaps most coveted of all, the Spanish Netherlands. Let all these pass, however indirectly, under the power and influence of one who was already the most powerful monarch in the world, and Europe's liberties were gone for ever. From the Mediterranean to the German Ocean, and from Gibraltar to the Rhine, Louis would be dominant and supreme. Well might he exclaim in an

¹ Louis' immediate heir was, of course, his eldest son, the Dauphin. Philip of Anjou was the Dauphin's son, but only his second son, and not therefore in all probability likely to succeed to the crown of France.

ecstasy of triumph: "Il n'y a plus de Pyrénées"! ¹ The barriers, which even nature set between the rival realms, were down.

Before this new and awful menace William did not quail. He saw the whole effort of his lifetime—the long campaigns in Flanders, the Ryswick settlement, the difficult bargaining that followed—reduced in a single moment to mere dust. But he faced the issue squarely like the gallant fighter that he was; and, seeing no other choice, prepared for war. Yet, even at this crisis, he had still to reckon with the doubtful loyalty of Englishmen. Though the Whigs rallied staunchly to the cause of freedom, the Tories remained openly indifferent or secretly sympathised with France. Luckily for William, however, Louis himself with almost incredible stupidity played into his hands. By two acts of gratuitous and insolent aggression he re-awoke the sleeping fears of William's English subjects, and left this country no possible alternative but war. In the first place, no sooner was the dead Carlos' will made public than Louis laid hands with a most indecent haste upon the spoil. He hurriedly occupied the Spanish Netherlands; he sent troops to occupy the forts upon the very edge of the Dutch frontier line of Holland; another step forward and his grip would close upon that long menaced state and his armies hold the Rhine. Such a threat alone was more than the generosity of most Englishmen would stomach; yet the infatuated monarch must needs insult their feelings further by a direct challenge offered to themselves. Louis' old protégé, King James, had just died at the French court; his claim to England could no more be supported; but the exiled Stuart had left behind an heir—the son, now grown to boyhood, whose birth twelve years before had done so much to drive his father's subjects to rebellion. Whether the boy was in reality James's son, or whether (as scandal said) he was a mere "pretender," smuggled into the palace in a warming-

¹ There is much doubt whether Louis actually spoke these famous words.

pan, Louis cared not a rap. ; In flat defiance of the Ryswick Treaty, he now proclaimed him the true possessor of the English crown and William a usurper. This made William's case complete. Henceforth, secure of national support and conscious of his high mission, he prepared to measure his strength yet once again against his lifelong foe. Fate decreed otherwise. One day, while he was riding in the grounds of Hampton Court, his horse stumbled on a mole-hill and threw him heavily. The only actual hurt that he sustained was a broken collar-bone. But his frail and outworn constitution was not sufficient to overcome the shock ; and after a brief illness he was dead. The struggle against Louis, long, stern and bloody, but at the last triumphant, was reserved for other hands than his.

CHAPTER III

MARLBOROUGH'S WARS

ANNE, second daughter of King James II, and last member of the house of Stuart to ascend the English throne, was altogether lacking in those qualities which had made its other members either notable or notorious. A more commonplace character than this plain, stout, dull-witted female it is impossible to imagine. A good mother of a family she might have been, for she had a kindly heart. But even this humble distinction was denied her, and not one of her numerous children survived the age of ten. Her husband, Prince George of Denmark, was as stupid as herself. "I have tried him drunk, and I have tried him sober," said Charles II jokingly, "and there is nothing in him." George was, in fact, a complete non-entity. He carried no weight whatever in English politics. The rôle played by his predecessor, William, was utterly beyond his powers; and the authority still vested in the crown was swayed by other and less honest hands. The Queen's impressionable and doting mind was easily influenced by her female friends; and during her reign the real powers behind the throne were two scheming women, each of whom was in turn successful in capturing Anne's ear. The first and more important of these two confidantes was a certain Sarah Jennings, by marriage the Duchess of Marlborough, and thus, by an amazing stroke of fortune, wife to the one man who was capable of preserving the country at this crisis of its fate.

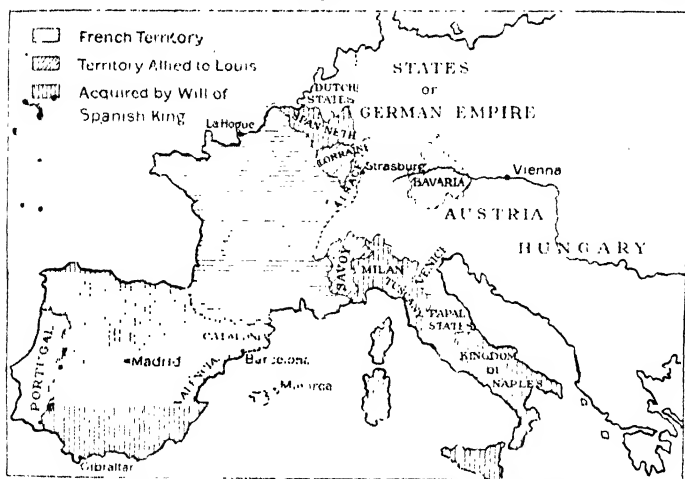
The fact is that now and for a dozen years to come the

main scene of English effort, was pitched upon the battlefields, of Europe, and the control of England's destiny passed for the time being into the soldiers' hands. Anne's incompetence was, therefore, through the assistance of his wife, the opportunity of Marlborough; and the world-shaking genius of this great commander dwarfed and threw completely in the shade every petty plot and subterfuge of the time-serving politicians here at home. For so great a man, Marlborough's past career had been strangely chequered and discreditable. Twice in ten years he had played the traitor to his King. First, after helping by his defeat of Monmouth at Sedgemoor to establish James II on the throne, he had been among the foremost to accept the Revolution, and exchange the old master for the new. But, though he had joined William with indecent haste, Marlborough's new allegiance did not last. Treasonable correspondence had soon passed between him and James. He had revealed important military secrets to the French, boasted of the act, and was dismissed from William's service in disgrace. Such twofold treachery has no excuse; and the truth is that in Marlborough's character honour had no place. He was a self-seeker, first and last, working for his own ends with calculating foresight, and far from satisfied with power alone. It is only too clear that he was a slave to money, and notoriously stingy in the use of it. "That I am not the Duke of Marlborough," said some one so accosted by mistake, "is not difficult to prove: in the first place, I have but two guineas in my pocket; and, in the second place, they are very freely yours." It is recorded that he even grudged a pension to a servant who had saved his life. Happily for England, however, fate had so arranged that Marlborough's interests and her own now coincided; and the keen penetration of that cool, well-balanced mind was set at the service of her cause. In the Council Chamber Marlborough's judgment never faltered, and seldom failed; so that European statesmen came almost to regard it as infallible. But, though much more than a soldier, he was a soldier before all else. His handsome bearing and suave

geniality of manner made him the darling of his men. His consideration for their needs was wonderful; and from his sublime confidence they caught the inspiration of an invincible resolve. No accident could ruffle his composure; he was like an iceberg amid the fury of a battle; and, whether in planning the details of an attack or the larger strategy of a campaign, his daring and imagination have never been surpassed. He is probably the greatest military genius this country has produced, and worthy to rank with Foch, Caesar, and Napoleon among the greatest captains of all time.

And never had the nations of Europe greater need for such a man. France had already proved that alone and single-handed she could hold out against the world; and now with the renewal of the war in 1701 she no longer stood alone. By the accident of Carlos' will Spain had been added to her strength. Bavaria, too, had joined her; and Savoy was presently to follow suit. The odds were, in fact, enormously altered in her favour. Nor was this all. Like Germany in 1914, she possessed the huge advantage of interior lines. War threatened her, it is true, upon four separate fronts; in the north, where England and Holland were certain to attack; on the east, where the German states were gathering to the Rhine; in the south, where Austria was intending to dispute the French heir's inheritance of Spanish Italy; and, lastly, in Spain itself, where an English campaign was to be launched to drive the French heir from off his throne. But Louis' hands, though full, were not embarrassed. Like the German Kaiser, he was not content to remain on the defensive. Standing, as it were, in the centre of the ring, he struck out north, east, and south, against his enemies. With one army he drove back the Dutch upon the Lower Meuse. With a second he crossed the Rhine, and, joining hands with his Bavarian ally, prepared a blow against the Austrian capital itself. With a third he occupied the plains of Lombardy, and held Milan against the Austrian regiments of Prince Eugene. In Spain alone did Louis wage a war of pure defence.

The reason is obvious enough. Under the dead Carlos' will he had promptly claimed possession on his grandson's behalf; and Spain was already his. In Spain, therefore, the task confronting the allies appeared, perhaps, the most hopeless of success. Though Portugal was presently to join them, all operations had to be planned from England, and maintained across the sea. The Spaniards themselves, oddly enough, were for the most part in favour of the French interloper; and when Lord Peterborough



THE RESOURCES OF LOUIS XIV IN WAR.

appeared with a small English expedition to attempt the recovery of Spain, he had before him a very uphill fight. Happily Peterborough was the one man out of a thousand for the job. In lightning marches he outdid Hannibal himself. He could make one regiment do the work of five; and he was a past master in the game of bluff. He would ride up to a town, and cow it into unconditional surrender by the threat of instant bombardment with purely imaginary guns. At another time he would improvise a troop of cavalry by purchasing horses and putting infantry upon

their backs.' Such methods soon bore fruit. Within a few months this astonishing adventurer had captured the impregnable citadel of Barcelona by direct assault. Through that brilliant stroke Valencia and Catalonia—a large strip of Eastern Spain—fell at once into his hands; and Peterborough's successes hereabouts laid open Madrid to another English army from the West. In 1706 Philip, the French usurper, took to flight, and the Spanish capital was entered by our troops. The success, however, was short-lived. The Spaniards very soon rallied against us. Peterborough went off disgusted to another seat of war; and the chance of recovering Spain by a direct conquest vanished. One most vital consequence, however, came from the English effort in these parts. Like Cromwell, Marlborough had discerned that there was use for the English fleet in southern waters. By such a threat to French and Spanish shipping, it was possible at once to divert attention from the English Channel, and also to embarrass the enemy's most vital Mediterranean trade. To the Mediterranean, therefore, was dispatched a strong contingent of the English fleet. Its activities were unexpectedly successful. It covered the transport of supplies and reinforcements to Lord Peterborough. It won for us the indisputable title to command the middle seas; and, above all, it effected a capture, without which our hold upon them could never have been long maintained. In 1704 Admiral Rooke was cruising near Gibraltar with some troops aboard, when it occurred to him to try an assault upon the place. The Rock was not then, as it now is, a fortress bristling with defensive works and guns, and Rooke was able to get his men ashore without much serious opposition. The day after the preliminary bombardment was, as it chanced, a Saint's day. Most of the Spanish garrison went piously to church to hear the Mass; and, finding the place unguarded, some English sailors clambered up by a precipitous track, hoisted their flag above the citadel, and thus, by a lucky accident, rendered Gibraltar ours. The importance of its capture it is well-nigh impossible to

over-estimate. It gave us a permanent base in enemy waters. It enabled Nelson, at a later date, to maintain his famous blockade upon Napoleon's ports. Without it the Nile and Trafalgar could never have been won.

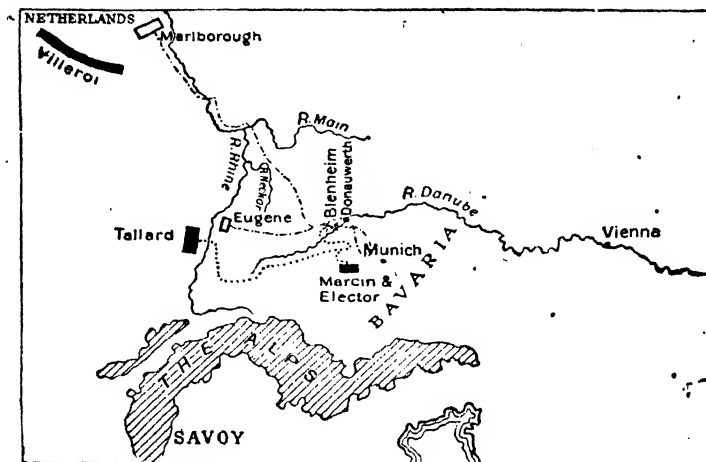
But it is time that we were turning to other theatres of war more hotly contested and, for the present purpose, more immediately decisive. In the opening year of 1701 Louis had gained one great initial advantage over the allied troops. He had struck, as we have already said, at several points, but, above all, he had struck upon the north, over-running the Spanish Netherlands and driving back the Dutch on their own soil. The value of this success was undeniable. It set France free at a blow from that peril to which she is by nature peculiarly subjected—the peril of invasion from the north. So things stood at the end of the first year's campaigning, when Marlborough's genius suddenly began to put a different complexion on affairs and to raise for the allies a new star of hope. In 1702 he appeared in the Low Countries with a small but efficient force of English soldiers; and in the next two years by dint of stubborn fighting succeeded in thrusting back the French from the Meuse valley upon the more westerly line of Antwerp and Namur. The centre of the war now shifted to another quarter. Foiled in the north, Louis turned his attention towards the east. There lay Austria, distracted by Hungarian inroads on her rear, threatened by Bavaria on her flank, and, as it appeared to Louis' eye, at least, an easy prey. An imposing scheme was formed for her undoing. In 1703 a part of the French army of the Rhine advanced into Bavaria, joined hands there with Max the Elector, and prepared, in conjunction with the French troops in Italy, to sweep all three together on Vienna and deal embarrassed Austria a knock-out blow. From the very start, however, the imposing scheme missed fire. The forces in Italy were unexpectedly detained by the defection of Savoy upon their flank. The others, instead of marching straight ahead without them, waited, and lost their chance. Before another year was out they had been

overthrown and practically destroyed upon the field of Blenheim.

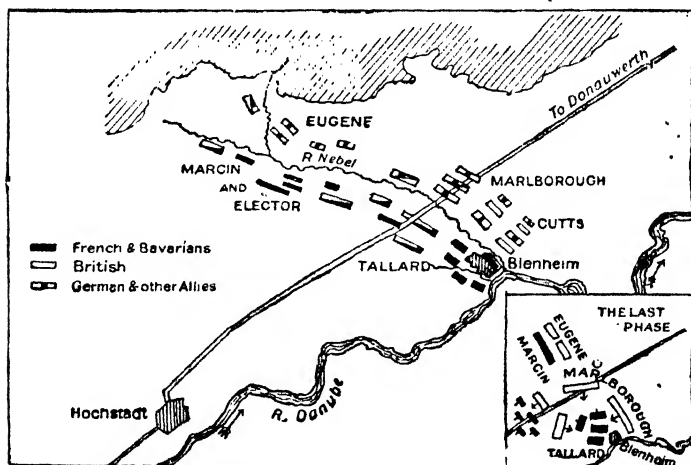
The stroke by which fortune was so miraculously reversed was planned in the opening months of 1704. At that time the French forces, confident, and on the whole victorious, were massed as follows:—In the Netherlands and opposite to Marlborough stood the Marshal Villeroi with the main army of France. In Alsace, and covering the frontier of the Upper Rhine, was Tallard, faced by Eugene who had recently been summoned from Milan to the defence of Germany. The third great army under the leadership of Marcin was waiting in Bavaria for the moment when the march upon Vienna should begin. With these three armies of Villeroi, Tallard, and Marcin, the initiative for action indubitably lay. Yet it was Marlborough, and not they, who acted first. His plan, which, for sheer audacity, may rank with the greatest strategic conceptions of all time, was simply this—to leave a covering force to contain Villeroi, to draw away from Holland the main mass of his own troops, to march with these up the valley of the Rhine, pass across Tallard's front, and fall with unexpected and annihilating force upon Bavaria. The plan involved big hazards. If the French guessed its object in time to send Marcin sufficient reinforcements, it must fail. Yet upon its success and its rapid success hung, not the fate of Austria only, but the whole fortune of the allied arms. Its details were therefore very carefully concealed. Marlborough took the whole responsibility upon himself, asking leave of the home government but in the vaguest terms; and so profound was the secrecy which he observed that, when in May he quitted Holland and sped hot-foot up the valley of the Rhine, nobody in England had the smallest notion whither he was bound. That the arm-chair critics wagged their dubious heads over what seemed to them a mad adventure did not trouble Marlborough much. To the French marshals, at any rate, his movements were a source of grave perplexity, and throughout the early stages of his march he kept them upon tenter-hooks of doubt. Whether

he was intending to strike east into Bavaria or westward into France, there was no means of knowing. Tallard, fearing the latter, clung strictly to Alsace and redoubled his watch. By the first week in June, however, Marlborough had arrived in his march along the Rhine as far south as its tributary the Neckar. Here was the point at which his real intentions were bound to be revealed. Should he swing right and deploy his army westward, it must be clear that his objective lay in France. But he did not turn west. He left Prince Eugene to keep an eye on Tallard's army, then, himself, turned eastward along the Neckar valley, picked up the German army of the Margrave of Baden, and disappeared from sight in the direction of Bavaria. Before, however, he could hope to penetrate its frontier, there remained one serious obstacle to cross—the River Danube; and the next step for Marlborough was to secure a bridge suitable for the passage of his troops and for the maintenance of the long communications with his base. Such a bridge there was at the town of Donauwörth; and for Donauwörth accordingly he made. Before the Franco-Bavarians could reinforce its garrison, he had swept down upon it, stormed the heights of Schellenberg which command the approaches to the city, and occupied the bridge. The way was now open to the Bavarian plains, and Marlborough put the opportunity to immediate and most vigorous use. His troops were set to lay waste the country-side in all directions; scores of villages were burnt and plundered; cavalry rode to the very gates of Munich. Shaken by such rough treatment, the Elector wavered: a little more, and he was on the verge of making terms. The great march's purpose appeared to have been achieved.

But the end was not yet. The French had no intention of leaving so valuable an ally as the Elector in the lurch, and already Tallard was hurrying eastward upon Marlborough's tracks. In the last days of July, his arrival in Bavaria turned the scales. With Marcin's and the Elector's, his troops outnumbered Marlborough's, and when all these three together struck up towards the Danube, threatening



THE CAMPAIGN OF BLENHEIM.



THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM.

Donauwörth and the vital artery of his supplies, the Englishman was forced to hurry northward for his life. But Marlborough too had a surprise in store. Upon the north bank of the river, fresh from a secret and forced march out of the Rhineland, Eugene was awaiting him. Near Donauwörth the two joined hands. Their combined numbers were now, at least equal, or, if anything, perhaps superior to the armies of Tallard, Marcin, and the Elector, which, about the same time, but a little further westward, had crossed the Danube to its northern bank. They were now encamped some five miles distant, blocking the space between the river and the hills. Their right flank rested upon the little village of Blenheim. It was the 12th of August.

The engagement which was to be joined upon the morrow, and which, in its crushing issue, was to be decisive of so much, may, in a sense, be called the first great British battle of modern times. It began that long and magnificent series of encounters by which the struggle against France was for a century maintained, and which culminated at last on the field of Waterloo. In scale perhaps it was not particularly imposing, for the numbers on each side were little more than fifty thousand men, and neither possessed above a hundred pieces of field artillery. But its tactics were of a piece with what followed rather than with that which went before. The cavalry, for example, no longer charged, like Cromwell's Ironsides, pistol in hand, but were taught to rely almost entirely on cold steel. The infantry, too, had changed considerably since the English Civil Wars, and had become a far more efficient and important arm. It consisted no longer of musketeers and pikemen intermingled, for, thanks to the recent invention of the bayonet, the eighteenth century foot-soldier did duty for them both. His fire-arm was still a clumsy instrument, short in range, and still to be loaded at the muzzle, but, in comparison with the foot-soldiers of Marston Moor and Naseby, he himself was very highly trained. To advance in close order, as did the British infantry at Blenheim, under a withering fire

from musket-ball and grape-shot, and yet to reserve the precious volley until point-blank range was reached and the two lines were practically touching, must have been a supreme test of men's discipline and endurance. British pluck has seldom shown up better than under the grim ordeal of these bloody fields. Nevertheless, it would be ungracious to pretend that the victory of Blenheim was ours and ours alone. Eugene's German army was a most valuable addition to our strength, and, though it was on the English contingent that fell the main brunt of the fighting, the credit of assisting the decisive stroke at the crisis of the day lay with the Savoyard.

It was early, before sunrise, on 13th August that the allied force moved out from its encampment and took the Blenheim road. The morning mists hung heavy; and the force was never sighted until close upon its goal. That goal was the French army, which lay extended on a broad front of some four miles between the Danube and the hills. Its position was in some degree strengthened and protected by a marshy stream, the Nebel, which flows into the river close to Blenheim. The upper reaches of this stream were held by the French left under Marcin and the Elector of Bavaria; but Tallard's command was mainly massed in Blenheim itself, thus leaving, as we shall see, the centre somewhat weak. It was, however, against Blenheim, the capture of which would have turned the whole French line, that Marlborough chose to strike. About noon, when all was ready, Lord Cutts, whom they called the Salamander for his love for the hottest of the fight, was ordered up against the village palisades. Both armies withheld their fire to the latest moment, the English actually waiting until their leader touched with his sword the timber of the palisades. There was a brief tussle, the English thrusting and wrenching to obtain an entry; and then, not without heavy loss, they were hurled back. Within an hour or so the experiment was repeated; and again it failed. Marlborough recognised the failure; and with that quickness of thought which is the gift of great commanders he altered his whole

plan. He looked now for an opportunity of decision to the centre of the line. In spite of the difficulties here presented by the marshy bottom, he got his cavalry across the Nebel. By timely aid from Eugene he was enabled to maintain them there while the line of infantry was forming; and then, as the sun sloped westward, he hurled his full strength into a last assault. It pierced the thin French centre through and through; and, while Marcin's men were falling slowly back and dispatching urgent messages to Tallard on their right, the English burst a gap and divided the two French commanders from each other. Marcin's messengers were captured or went astray, so that Tallard in his ignorance clung on to Blenheim until it was too late and the English were closing in upon his rear. The main bulk of his forces were thus caught in a trap. Their surrender was inevitable: the first summons, indeed, was haughtily rejected, and the officer commanding in the village drowned himself in the Danube to avoid a worse disgrace. But, eventually, some ten thousand men or over of the proudest and most formidable army in the world gave themselves up. The Battle of Blenheim was not to end the war. It did not even decide the final issue; but, though in its immediate result it reduced Bavaria to impotence and saved Vienna, it did much more than that. It destroyed once and for all the prestige of Louis and the growing tradition of French invincibility. It marked, in a word, the turning of the tide.

II

After Blenheim the focus of the war swung back to Flanders once again. Pressure was kept up against the strong French defences; but it was a painful and laborious business; results were meagre, progress slow. A sort of stagnation crept over the members of the Grand Alliance; and only the incredible folly of the French in accepting a battle gave Marlborough at last the opportunity of winning one. At Ramillies, in 1706, he achieved a startling and most fruitful triumph. The Frenchmen ran as they had

never run before. Their morai was broken, and their lines of defence began to crumble. Before the year was over, Marlborough had thrown them out of the Spanish Netherlands and back on their own soil. The magic of his success had awaked, in short, a new terror in the enemy's heart: for France herself seemed threatened with invasion. In 1708, the threat took more visible shape. A fresh victory at Oudenarde opened to Marlborough the passage of the frontier. He laid siege to the great frontier fort of Lille, and after sixty days' investment it surrendered. Louis himself took fright. He offered terms, and very generous terms they were. But the blood of the British Government was up and the offer was refused.

Thus, in 1709, the negotiations, which might easily have led to an honourable and advantageous peace, were broken off. It was a false and fatal step. For there was now to be disclosed that wonderful phenomenon which has so often in the history of European warfare defied and falsified the easy calculations of her enemies—the spirit of France at bay. Never perhaps has a nation been more utterly exhausted than the French nation at this crisis. Louis' treasury was nearly empty. His men were dispirited; the confidence of his commanders shaken. The spectre of famine hovered over the land. Yet the appeal of Louis to his people's loyalty was one which, in France at least, has never gone unanswered. The sacred soil was in danger, and with a wonderful effort of self-sacrifice the French nation rallied to its defence. A new army was enrolled, composed for the most part of tattered, miserable, half-starving lads, but fired with the high ardour of a new resolve. Villars, the one general who had suffered as yet no disaster on the field, was appointed at its head; and in the summer of 1709 he prepared for a last blow which should deliver France. Marlborough was already battering at the now diminished line of frontier fort's. In early September Tournai, after a magnificent defence, had shared the same fate as the neighbouring town of Lille; and Mons, which William had once taken, once lost, was the next to

be attacked. Marlborough shrewdly reckoned that this threat to Mons, the fall of which must lay bare the entrance into Northern France, would draw the French army into open battle; and he was right. Villars marched up at once to a few miles south of Mons, and by 9th September he had entrenched his army strongly among the woods of Malplaquet. Marlborough moved immediately to the attack. He had the superiority of numbers and, as he imagined, of moral. He had not realised as yet the enthusiastic temper of the new French troops. That enthusiasm, aided by the natural advantages which belonged to the defence, proved his undoing. For when the English came up against the fringes of the wood they were checked, held, and finally repulsed with an appalling loss. The earthworks, strengthened with felled timber and concealed by the thick scrub, enabled the French to take full toll of the attackers at a minimum loss to their own ranks. By noon it became obvious that the allies' strength was spent and they could do no more. But the French, too, were sorely shaken. They had not the numbers to press home their brief advantage; and before evening they effected a retirement, defeated it may be, but unbroken and unpursued. Though Marlborough held the battle-field and soon after captured Mons, there was cold comfort in such triumphs. This "Pyrrhic victory" of Malplaquet, which cost him some twenty thousand men as against the French fifteen, sounded a death-knell to his hopes. An advance on Paris was no longer possible. The grand effort of France had achieved the purpose of her monarch; and, if Louis could not hope to win the war, it was now clear, at any rate, that he could not decisively be beaten.

The truth is that Marlborough's luck had turned at last; and close upon the heels of military failure came the more sinister misfortune of political defeat. The wire-pullers at home had for some time since been busy in undermining the influence of his name. His wife the Duchess, erstwhile confidante of Her Majesty the Queen, had lost the secret of her mysterious hold; and a fresh favourite, Mrs. Masham,

was now supreme in the inner parlours of the Court. To the Tory politicians, who had long been hankering for a separate peace with France, this lady was a most serviceable tool, and she used the opportunities of private conversation to poison her mistress's mind against the pro-war Whigs. Nor did the rot stop there. However loudly Whig leaders might proclaim the importance of humbling Louis to the dust, the country began to tire of them and their opinions. Their arrest and trial of a certain High Church parson for preaching sermons on the Tory side roused a regular storm of indignation. A year after Malplaquet was fought the Whigs were turned ignominiously from office, and a Tory Government under Harley and St. John stepped into their shoes. Secret negotiations with Louis were immediately begun, and not even Marlborough himself had any power to stop them. While he was still hammering at the French frontier lines, the politicians were tenderly engaged in letting France down lightly at the council-board. In 1712 matters had proceeded far enough to declare a termination of hostilities and bring our armies home. It was not until next year that the actual treaty was concluded at Utrecht; but the principles on which its terms were based had been decided already when Harley and St. John entered upon power. They were not principles which red-hot enemies of France could approve; for Louis' grandson Philip was allowed the throne of Spain, and many vowed that the cause for which the allies had been fighting had been criminally betrayed. The fact was, however, that, since the allies originally went to war, the circumstances had greatly changed. Owing first to his father's and then to his elder brother's death, Charles, the Austrian candidate for Spain, had himself been elected to the Emperor's throne. That Spain also should now be given to him seemed even less desirable than that it should be given to Philip. So to Philip it went by the Treaty of Utrecht, a pledge being exacted that he should never under any circumstance ascend the throne of France. Behind that pledge, moreover, there were now sound guarantees. France

had fallen from her high estate; her power to harm was for the moment gone; and the allies saw to it that her more dangerous claws were drawn. The Spanish Netherlands, that standing menace to her northern frontier, were made over to her arch-enemy the Austrian; and the Dutch were allowed the privilege of garrisoning the barrier towns: Gibraltar remained with us, setting the Mediterranean and the Spanish ports, as it were, within our grip. But more important still than this and other minor acquisitions¹ was the war's more general effect upon our power at sea. Shouldering, as we did, almost the entire burden of the naval fighting, we emerged from the ordeal, as in 1718, with a fleet incomparably stronger than when we entered it. France, as she weakened, had lost power to challenge us. Even Holland, our old rival, had dropped out of the race; and thus the maritime supremacy, which Cromwell had recovered and Charles II lost, was now, by a sort of accident, thrust into our hands; and, while most men imagined that our destiny must turn upon the battle-fields of Flanders, Britain was learning, so to speak, upon the sly, to rule the waves.

Meantime the man who had stood almost alone between Europe and her fate was treated with an ingratitude which moves our pity even for one who was himself a monster of ingratitude. Marlborough when he reached home was assailed with every sort of mean abuse. He was accused of pilfering the public funds, hooted in London thoroughfares as a thief, and driven at last into ignominious exile on the continent. Anne, still infatuated by the egregious Mrs. Masham, lifted no finger to protect her servant; and very soon she was herself to pass from off the stage. The reign, which had begun amid the clash of arms, was to end almost immediately with the return of peace. The dull, good-natured lady, who, in name at least, had ruled over the country through these stirring years, had at the last but one melancholy claim to excite the languid interest of her

¹ England received Newfoundland, Nova Scotia (Acadia) from France; from Spain, Minorca and certain trading rights in South American waters.

countrymen. She died without an heir ; and, while she lay a-dying, Whigs and Tories were once more in hot dispute over the vexed question of the royal succession. The issue, however, did not really stand in doubt. The unromantic nature of the feeble Anne had robbed the House of Stuart of its old glamour ; and, though at times the Queen's own thoughts might turn to the young exile who, despite all that had happened, was still her father's son, yet England on her death accepted, almost without murmur, the importation from abroad of an unknown German Prince.

CHAPTER IV

THE 'FIFTEEN AND THE 'FORTY-FIVE

JUST a century before Anne's death it will be recalled that a young princess of England, daughter of . James I., and sister of Charles I., had been married to the Protestant ruler of the German Palatinate. With the subsequent misfortunes of that ill-starred couple we are not here concerned, nor yet with their daughter Sophia, who was duly married in her turn to the Elector of Hanover; but rather with Sophia's son, Prince George by name, now Hanover's Elector in his father's stead. For George, though three parts German and but one part English, was the only possible heir (bar one) to the vacant English throne. However roundabout his claim, he was at least a Protestant, which was more than could be said for his one rival; and by the Act of Settlement drawn up in William's reign he had already been appointed Anne's successor. So, when Anne died in 1714, the English people, not knowing of a better, accepted this alien monarch as a matter of due course. After all that had happened, it was impossible to pretend that the bestowal of the crown was any longer of such vital consequence; and very few could feel either wildly enthusiastic or righteously indignant over the coronation of King George the First. It was perhaps easier upon the whole to be amused.

The other claimant to whom we have referred was, of course, that son who had been born to James at the time of the Seven Bishops' trial, best known in English history as the Old Pretender, and in France, where his years of exile had been mostly spent, as the Chevalier de St. George. This

man, who like his father bore the unlucky name of James, had still his following in England, a parcel of staunch unbending Tories who gave their nightly toast to the "King over the water," coupled with it the name of "the little gentleman in black velvet," whose innocent burrowings beneath the earth had brought the hated William to his grave, and swore in secret the solemnest of oaths that one day not far hence the Stuart should come into his own again. There was perhaps a certain air of unreality about the tragic devotion of these solid English gentlemen for a now exploded cause; but in Scotland, the Stuarts' true home and the last stronghold of Jacobite enthusiasm, things were different. There the proud national spirit, fostered through many centuries of border-warfare, was smarting afresh under the infliction of a singular indignity. Early in Anne's reign, when the great French war began, the fear of an alliance between Louis and the Scots had driven the English government to a sweeping precautionary measure. Briefly, they had insisted that Scotland should come directly under the English rule. In 1707, after a last stormy session, the old Scots Parliament, which had sat so long in Edinburgh, was told that it must sit in Edinburgh no more. Members were to be sent to Westminster instead, and there merged in the common council of the united realm. For purposes of government, and also (since custom-duties were abolished on the border) for purposes of trade, England and Scotland were henceforward to be one. True, the Presbyterian Kirk was to remain the official church beyond the Tweed; the Scottish laws and law-courts continued to be administered apart; and from many English taxes the poorer and at that time far less prosperous country was justifiably exempt. Yet, for all that, Scotland was no longer mistress of her fate; she had lost her treasured independence; and can it be wondered that the so-called "Union" awoke a sense of bitter grievance in a race the most proudly independent in the whole wide world?

That grievance gave James Stuart his opportunity—an

opportunity which very characteristically, however, he threw, completely away. A worse leader of a forlorn hope than the Old Pretender can scarcely indeed be imagined. Conscience he had and a rigid sense of duty, which forbade him to give up the Roman Catholic faith and so remove the chief obstacle which kept him from the throne. He was brave too, and had fought with credit among the French dragoons at Oudenarde and Malplaquet. But imagination, audacity, or firm resolve were altogether wanting from his character. And so it was that, when in 1715 risings both in Highlands and in Lowlands were made on his behalf, James Stuart himself was not upon the scene. The Earl of Mar, who led the Highland clansmen, met Argyll's troops at Sheriffmuir, and, though no victory was gained by either party, the rebellion began at once to peter out. When soon afterwards the Pretender at last landed, he came a month too late. He accepted his ill-success with pious resignation. "It is no new thing with me," he said, "to be unfortunate"; and six months later he had re-embarked for France. His parting act was typical. His troops had, it seems, destroyed some crofters' huts and burnt their crops: James sent back a message of sincere regret and money in compensation for their loss. His brief adventure over, he wandered on the continent, where in 1719 he married a Polish wife, and the next year there was born to him a son—Charles Edward, the Jacobites' last hope.

.

Five-and-twenty years went by before Charles Edward was of age to strike his blow. During the interval England meanwhile had prospered greatly under Walpole's guidance, but under Walpole's guidance she had also fallen asleep. There were not above twelve thousand troops all told in the country's service; and, though we were once again at war with France, little thought was given to the peril from the north. Yet that peril was none the less imminent. Scotland at anyrate had not been sleeping; the memory of her old grievance was still nursed with a grim tenacity; and in a

thousand Highland cots the men were keeping their claymores bright against the looked-for day of Prince Charlie's home-coming. Abroad, too, intrigue was stirring; France saw the value of a sudden stroke; and Rome, ever on the watch, had bestowed her blessing on the enterprise. On 23rd July, 1745, a small French frigate landed at Moidart, on the coast of the West Highlands, a young man undemonstratively dressed "in a black coat, with a plain shirt, not very clean, a fair round wig, black stockings, and brass buckles on his shoes". His arrival was not expected; he had brought but half-a-dozen friends along with him; and, when the neighbouring chiefs were summoned out to meet him, there was a very comprehensible reluctance to fall in with his design. A young Macdonald, however, showed a bolder spirit than the rest, and, seeing him finger the handle of his broad-sword, Charles Edward turned, "You at least," he said, "will not forsake me". "I will follow you to the death" was the reply; and that loyal declaration won the day. Lochiel, the most influential of the Highland chieftains, joined the cause. Enthusiasm ran like wild-fire through the countryside. The Macdonalds, the Stewarts of Appin, and other fighting clans soon gathered for the fray; and, when Lochiel brought in his Camerons to Charles Edward at Glenfinnan, the Royal Standard was then and there unfurled upon the bleak hill-side; and the war had begun.

As the insurgents swept south upon the Lowlands, the two English regiments posted on the Forth fell back in cowardly flight. Edinburgh town surrendered without more ado, though the citadel itself held out; and, as the Prince rode through the streets in his Stuart tartan kilt and with a white rose pinned upon his bonnet, the crowd pressed round in an ecstasy of devotion to touch his clothes or kiss his hand. Meanwhile Sir John Cope, the English Government's commander, had rallied his timid troops upon the coast; and he was now beginning to march them back upon the capital along the Dunbar road. Twelve miles from Edinburgh the two armies collided on the field of Prestonpans. It was a short day's work, To

the skirl of their pipes the Highlanders charged home; and the cold steel of their claymores was more than even the dragoons could face. Cope's guns were carried by assault, almost before they had fired a single shot. In ten minutes the battle had been turned into a rout, and the English; "running like rabbits," had melted away.

The tempting road to England now lay open; and the Prince, whose dare-devil spirit was the heart and soul of the rebellion, determined, against all advice, to take it. "Gentlemen," he had said on the day of Prestonpans, "I have thrown away my scabbard"; and that gesture was the key to his campaign. He saw that he must strike while men's minds were yet undecided. Speed was everything; there could now be no turning back; and who shall say but he was right? Six short weeks of triumph were ahead of him. Starting from Edinburgh with 6000 men (still Highlanders in the main, for the Lowlanders even now were chary of lending him support), he marched south, avoided the English force at Newcastle, and, taking the western route, struck down through Moffat and Carlisle to Manchester. Though the force he had eluded was already closing on his rear, and though another English army lay ahead, Prince Charlie did not falter. He pushed bravely on, and, at the beginning of December, he had marched with colours flying into Derby. He was now within 130 miles of the capital itself. London was in a panic; there was a run upon the Bank; and King George the Second wavered in an agony of doubt between taking the road for Derby—or for Dover. How near the Prince then was to the goal of his desire, we at any rate shall never know. Many in England would have welcomed him as king; still more were waiting on the issue of events. But to gauge such chances is no easy matter. The assistance found in England had been disappointing. Lord George Murray, his lieutenant, was for caution; and, despite the Prince's protests, his followers now fell back upon the north. Crushed by the sense of failure, Charles himself lost heart. He grew moody and suspicious. He marched no longer at

the head of his battalions; and, after a few weeks' inconclusive skirmishing round Stirling, he drew off into the moors of Inverness. There, half-starved and in sadly failing spirits, his army was brought to bay at Culloden and overwhelmed. When the ill day's work was over and the butchery done (for the brutal Duke of Cumberland would give no quarter), the Jacobite cause was left without a leader. Charles had fled.

There is here no space to relate the well-known story of his wanderings and escape; how Flora Macdonald, a plucky Highland lass, undertook to convoy him in woman's clothes to a harbourage in Skye; how under the female *alias* of Betty Burke he ran the hazards of the road, passed weeks of terror and privation on inhospitable moors, and owed his life on more than one occasion to the loyal self-sacrifice of friendly thieves. It is enough to say that at last he was picked up by a French frigate and safely landed with Lochiel upon the coast of Brittany. Over the sordid dissipations of his later life it is well to draw a veil. To the Scots at any rate he remained the brave young hero of that last bold bid for freedom—the unhappy 'Forty-five; and, whether in songs taught to their children or in tales told over the fire-side, the memory of the "young Chevalier" was affectionately cherished long after all real ground for grievance against England was completely gone.

The Union had come to stay, and in the long run to prosper. The genius of the Scot has preserved until this day his separate racial character and sturdy independence; but it has also made him (as alone it could) a devoted and valuable servant of the common weal. Before ten years had elapsed after the 'Forty-five, Scots regiments had been enrolled under the British flag; and no troops could have fought better or more staunchly than did the Highlanders upon the Heights of Abraham. The Union too brought trade and industry across the Tweed. From being a people agricultural in the main the Scots developed a great aptitude for business. Linen and woollen manufactories sprang up. Ironworks and shipyards were started on the

Clyde; and from the Clydeside town of Greenock came the first effective steam engine, the invention of James Watt. By the close of the eighteenth century, in short, Scotland was fairly launched upon the course of prosperous enterprise and patient energy which has brought her into the very forefront of commercial progress, given her a full share and more than a full share in the administration of the Empire and the policies of state, and won for her sons the whole world over a reputation of cool commonsense, thoroughgoing efficiency and thrift.¹ Yet, whatever fortune brings him and wherever his lot be cast, the Scot remains eternally the Scot; and there is no worse insult that can be levelled at his pride than to be taken—hideous error—for an Englishman.

The contempt in which Scotland was held by Englishmen was soon removed by the intellectual achievements of her sons. Dr. Johnson refused, half-humorously, to believe that any good thing could come from across the border. But, before the end of the century, Hume had stood out as one of the greatest of modern philosophers, and Adam Smith, the author of the "Wealth of Nations," had made political economy into a science. Of the numerous Victorian statesmen who hailed from the north, it is scarcely necessary to speak.

CHAPTER V.
WALPOLE AND THE WHIGS

I.

MERE flash-in-the-pan as it appeared to be, the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715 had none the less one important consequence. It utterly discredited the sentimental English politicians who still backed the House of Stuart. To grumble against German George was one thing: to attempt to dethrone him was another; and, whether their disloyalty had taken active shape or no, it was quite clear that the Tories would have welcomed his dethronement. Seeing them, therefore, to be aiders and abettors of a cause which was ready to go the full length of actual treason, the nation henceforward would have none of them. The negotiators of the Treaty of Utrecht were hounded out of office. Both Harley and St. John had been more or less deeply involved; the former, now Earl of Oxford, was committed to the Tower; the latter fled abroad. The rout of their party was complete, and it was five and forty years before a Tory Government was suffered to sit at Westminster again. During that time the Whigs had the Administration to themselves, and, in the familiar expression, they "made hay while the sun shone". The days were now gone by when men of various political views were admitted into office side by side; there were no advances or concessions made to Tory waverers, and from top to bottom of the Government departments no post was given to any but strict Whigs. The Ministry's monopoly of Crown appointments was in fact disgracefully

exploited; not merely did they make Whig judges and Whig bishops, but they dispensed to faithful henchmen a whole host of lesser jobs as custom-house collectors, Treasury clerks, Court chaplains, or even perhaps mere scullions in the royal kitchen. Thus political patronage became a veritable system, and a means of assuring to the Ministry in power the comfortable prospect of remaining there. For votes and abilities were easily bought by the offer of some lucrative appointment. If one man seemed likely to prove a dangerous critic, his tongue was silenced by a timely pension; if another proved himself a loyal adherent, he was rewarded by promotion and his salary increased. Nor did the scandalous abuse stop short of bribery. Money passed freely. Few were above accepting what none demurred to give, and "all those men," in the scathing words of Walpole, "had their price". The Tories were almost crushed out of existence, and their numbers were frequently reduced to but three or four score votes. It was a sordid and discreditable business, and, though the struggle of the parties was perhaps a lesser evil than the sword to sword encounters of the previous epoch, yet it commands our admiration infinitely less. Politics in truth were becoming a mere game, and a dirty game at that. The men who ruled the country were no longer honest patriots or, what is at least something, honest partisans. They were simply subtle schemers out for their own hand and their own pocket. The Whig magnates, under whose influence this evil condition of affairs sprang up, were often able masters of state-craft and finance, but they owned neither principles nor consciences. Their party stood, as we have already seen above, for liberty at home and enmity to monarchical France abroad. Yet, during the next twenty years' of Whig supremacy, they allowed England to stand by while France was bullying their old ally Austria, and, as for domestic legislation, they produced scarcely a single bill to prove the slightest interest in the people's welfare.¹ The

¹ The one or two trifling exceptions to this statement serve only to emphasise the barrenness of Whig idealism. Trial for witchcraft was

fact is that, like the Tories, the great Whigs were mostly drawn from a wealthy, selfish, and conceited aristocracy. Many of them were great landowners recently made peers by a king who owed his crown to their support. Fine gentlemen no doubt they were, cutting a handsome figure in the dapper knee-breeches and powdered periwigs of their Court costume, living in stately mansions replete with every ornament of luxury or art, polished in manner, witty or grave in speech, often scholarly by taste or education, and able to compose a well-turned peroration for a speech in Parliament, or to quote a tag from Horace when the port went round. But, courtly cultured gentlemen as they were, they carried their heads too high to condescend beneath them. They cared little or nothing for the troubles and distress of those they governed. Wealth and the pride of rank had blinded them to the enormous responsibilities of their position; nor did they ever dream of being called to give account for the conduct of their stewardship. The so-called electors up and down the country had next to no hold over their policy, and the whole system of representative government was becoming little better than a farce. The peers, of course, represented nobody except themselves, and the seats in the House of Commons were filled for the most part by men who owed their election entirely to the peers. Wholesale jobbery was the order of the day. The voters in each constituency were astonishingly few. In the so-called "rotten" boroughs where a once prosperous township had dwindled to the dimensions of a village, their numbers could often be counted on one hand. Most of them were more or less at the mercy of my lord at the Big House. Generally they were his tenants, and, since votes were not then given by secret ballot, and since my

abolished in 1736, and Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753 set a certain check on hasty and ill-considered matrimony. By this law it was enacted that only a qualified minister of the Established Church might perform the marriage ceremony, and that only after due publication of the banns. Since, however, the Act did not apply to Scotland, impatient couples, who could afford the luxury of a post-chaise, frequently evaded the law by an excursion across the border to the notorious Gretna Green.

lord knew well enough which way they cast their votes, it was as much as their security of hearth and home was worth to brave the consequence of his displeasure: there was sure, on the other hand, to be money going for those who voted as they were desired. It was therefore an easy matter for the big man to coax or to cajole his handful of dependants into electing the man whom he proposed. So the discreditable game went on, Whig Earls and Whig Viscounts jobbing obedient favourites into safe seats in a servile House of Commons, strengthening the solid phalanx of their Whig majority by each fresh addition of these party hacks, and, from the security of power which that majority afforded them, reaping a rich harvest in influence and money for themselves and a host of salaried appointments for their ambitious relatives or poor retainers. No wonder that the immediate upshot of the Whig régime was to produce in England a period of political stagnation and to undermine abroad the high prestige which the victories of Marlborough had won for her.

To check or change this grave abuse the Sovereign himself was powerless. If Anne had counted for little, the first two Hanoverians counted for still less. For one thing it is important to remember that both of them were thorough Germans. George I, who did not come to England till well on in middle age, was typical of the Teuton at his worst, with a coarse mind, disgusting manners, and a strong taste for vulgar pomp and ceremonial. George II, his son, who became King in 1727, tried hard to be a Briton and acquired a rich vocabulary of English oaths. But the German strain in him was never much disguised. Like the Kaiser Wilhelm, he possessed a veritable passion for designing uniforms. He strutted through life with the self-important air of a Prussian sergeant-major on parade, and showed, in short, that, whatever his pretences, Hanover was his "spiritual home". Such monarchs could hardly be popular in England, and they knew it. The only justification for their presence at Whitehall was the absence of a more eligible rival, and,

owing the crown as they did to the Whig politicians who had placed it on their heads, there was nothing for it but to leave the Whig politicians a free hand. Interference was, however, made the more impossible by their extreme ignorance of the country's politics and even of its language. George I talked no English, and, as his chief minister knew neither French nor German, all conversation had to be carried on in Latin, at which neither of the two was an adept. The inevitable followed. The King gave up attending at the consultations of his Cabinet, and became henceforward little better than an ornament or emblem of a power which was no longer his.

The mere accident, as it may seem, of the first George's foreign speech and the second's foreign accent had thus the most profound and far-reaching effect upon the history of our constitutional development. Hitherto the Cabinet or committee of leading ministers had been chosen by the King, and at the King's personal discretion. The men he chose were not of necessity agreed on policy, and we have seen how, in the so-called Cabal of Charles II, such agreement was neither expected nor desired. Nor in the last resort did the real responsibility belong to them. They were simply the King's servants and advisers. The ultimate decision in all matters lay with the King. Under the Hanoverian monarchs all this was changed. Henceforth the leading minister—Prime Minister he presently was called—began to choose the other members of the Cabinet himself, and more and more it became his principle in choosing that all those members should agree with one another and with him upon the main political issues of the day. In fact, there came to be a tacit understanding that they all should work together like a team in harness, and that, whatever act one member might commit, the entire Cabinet should be responsible therefor. Thus, if a Chancellor of the Exchequer bungles with a budget, or the Secretary for War mishandles a campaign, the other ministers must either shoulder the blame themselves and face the music, or they must throw the offender overboard

by making him resign. Like Jonah's whale, no Cabinet can very long contain a man who disagrees with it.

The Prime Minister (though he himself did not assume that name) who first organised a Cabinet upon this principle was the great Sir Robert Walpole. He was a consummate master of the difficult art of keeping men together; and so successful was he in bending other wills to meet his own that for over twenty years, from 1720 to 1741, he maintained his position at the summit of affairs. Walpole was uniquely fitted for the political environment in which he lived. He had no ideals and no enthusiasms. The one thing he cared about supremely was his sport. The letters, we are told, which he always opened first at breakfast were his game-keeper's; and he began the parliamentary custom of a weekly holiday solely that he might go off to hunt his beagles in Richmond Park. Religion he had none; for he scoffed at all sects and philosophies by turns. His private life was no better than it should have been; and his public career was based, as we have seen, upon a system of unscrupulous wholesale bribery. His two merits were a great capacity for work and an extraordinarily cool and level head. He never worried. He ran no risks. He was ashamed or afraid of nothing except failure; and that with him was rare.

In one respect at any rate Walpole was at the moment an ideal man for Premier. He was a first-rate man of business; and business was the keynote of the age. England had long been a great trading country; but during the last century her trade had increased and multiplied by leaps and bounds. Fleets of her ships now touched at every continent and penetrated the ports of every sea. The quays of London, Bristol, and Plymouth were flooded with merchandise from all four quarters of the globe—sugar from Jamaica, tobacco from Virginia, rice from Carolina, porcelain and tea from China, coffee from Arabia, port from Portugal and lighter wines from France, cotton from the West Indies, silks, spices, and precious metals from the East. Thus wide-flung and productive was the activity

of our ships. But ships cannot be built or manned except by money; and, whatever may be the ultimate proceeds of such enterprise, the merchant will first need funds wherewith to launch it. Hence there had arisen in England a new type of man, unknown or practically unknown during the Middle Ages, a capitalist class who did business not in the old-fashioned way from hand to mouth, but owning a considerable equipment of ships and warehouses and possessing a large reserve of funds on which to draw.

Further, since the outlay and the risks involved in such long distance voyages were often more than a single individual could well undertake, these men preferred to band themselves in companies, pooling their resources and sharing in the gains. Such companies had first been formed as early as the sixteenth century, and by this time they were fairly numerous. There was an East India Company founded under Elizabeth in 1600, an African company, a Russia company, and a company for trade in the Levant. These were all formed and managed under a charter from the Government, which, while limiting their scope in various ways, gave them immense advantages and in some cases a virtual monopoly of trade. The wealth which accrued to the company's shareholders was generally enormous. One voyage is said to have brought in a profit—exceptional no doubt, but not unique—of 4700 per cent! No wonder merchants grew rich.

Now finance on a large scale requires machinery to work it. So banks had been started with which deposits might be made. They took people's surplus cash into safe keeping, paid them a small interest on the loan, and then recouped themselves by lending out the money so entrusted them to other people and at a slightly higher rate. The largest and most reliable of such banks was, of course, the Bank of England, founded in 1694 by a company of highly reputable and trusted shareholders. It had the great advantage of Government support which guaranteed its credit and allowed it to issue bank-notes made of paper in lieu of silver or gold. In return it was often expected to advance enormous

loans to the Government itself. For the State had recently become the greatest borrower of all. The expense of maintaining a large army and conducting costly European wars could not be wholly met by year-to-year taxation. So the Government had appealed for loans to any who would lend them; and thousands of individual citizens as well as banks and companies became the country's creditors. The interest offered by the Government was well over six per cent; and at this rate the "War Loan" had proved so attractive that, by the time the Treaty of Utrecht was signed, the State had borrowed in all some *fifty-two million pounds*. To pay off such a sum out of the taxes soon proved to be an impossible ideal. The "National Debt" had come to stay; and the lenders on their part were well content to prolong their loan indefinitely, provided that the interest were regularly paid. Even this proved, however, a serious burden upon the taxpayer's pocket; and the reduction of the rate of interest was seen before long to be a crying need.

Such was the condition of commercial enterprise and national finance when Sir Robert Walpole entered the political arena. His profound grasp of money-matters made him naturally a tower of strength; and his actual elevation to the premiership was due, in the first instance, to a serious fiasco in the other Whig ministers' finance. At this time the enormous Whig majority was divided into two unfriendly sections. On the one side was Sir Robert, who served under his brother-in-law, Lord Townshend. On the other side were Lord Stanhope and Lord Sunderland. In 1717 Townshend and Walpole were turned out of office, and went into more or less hostile opposition. Stanhope and Sunderland took up the reins; and the bungle which was soon to come was of their making. It fell on this wise. One of the results of the Treaty of Utrecht had been partially to open South America to English traders. A Company had been floated called the South Sea Company; and in the expectation of rich commerce and high dividends the public had gone mad on getting shares. The managers

of the Company, puffed up by their success, now embarked upon a still more daring scheme. They approached the English Government with the audacious proposition that they should take control of the National Debt and administer it themselves. For this privilege they offered to pay the stupendous sum (which of course they did not yet possess) of seven million pounds. The temptation to the Government was strong, and the offer was accepted. It now remained for the South Sea managers to turn the transaction to their own advantage, and this they were purposing to do as follows: To the holder of every share in the National Stock, they offered in exchange a share in the South Sea enterprise. Had the offer been universally accepted, they would indeed have been in clover. Thenceforward the State would owe its enormous debt to them alone, and to them alone would pay a regular return at six per cent. The previous lenders, on the other hand, would have taken in exchange shares which, according to the South Sea trade's success or failure, might either be worth a fortune or worth—nothing. As a matter of fact, the latter was much nearer to the truth. South America was not a gold mine; but the credulous public¹ took the bait, fancying that it was, and that all who could get a share in the undertaking would find themselves made men. Thousands accepted the managers' dishonest offer. The Stock Exchange became the scene of a reckless gamble. Everybody was scrambling to get South Sea stock; bidding ran higher and higher and men were prepared to pay any price to get it, till shares which originally had been worth but one hundred pounds could soon scarcely be purchased at a thousand. Then the truth leaked out and the bubble

¹ How light-heartedly and foolishly the public of this date was ready to invest its money in any concern or company that came along is well illustrated by the prospectus advertisements of various companies which have come down to us; thus men were invited to subscribe to a new scheme "for making salt water fresh"; to another "for making quick-silver malleable"; a third "to discover perpetual motion and utilise it for machinery"; a fourth "to fatten hogs by a new process"; and, most wonderful of all, "to engage in a secret undertaking which shall be made public hereafter".

burst. It was realised that South America's resources were not endless, and that, seeing the immense number of shareholders the Company had admitted, the profits, when divided among them all, would work out at almost nothing. The value of shares accordingly began to drop. Men sold out as eagerly as they had lately bought, and at whatever price they still could get. From a thousand to five hundred, and from five hundred to two, down the price came till at last it had nearly reached the point from which it started; and eventually men found that £135 was all that they could get for what had cost them three or four times as much a few weeks previous. Thus thousands lost practically all their savings at a blow. Many were ruined; and the outcry was tremendous. The Whig ministers who had permitted the fatal deal with the National Debt were called to answer for it. Lord Stanhope, who was not above suspicion of having used his inside knowledge to speculate in shares, was seized with a sudden fit while replying to his critics, and fell dying in the House. Sunderland, his colleague, resigned office. Here was the opportunity for a sound financier. The country was horrified at the late ministers' incompetence and fraud; and every one was glad when Walpole stepped into their shoes. He soon restored the national credit so sorely shaken by the gross manipulation of the Debt. The Debt itself he took back out of the Company directors' hands and set it once and for all upon a firmer basis, first, by forming a reserve or sinking fund out of which to pay it off by slow degrees,¹ and, second, by reducing the rate of interest to five and eventually to four per cent. Whig honour was thus redeemed; but one not too pleasant fact remains to be disclosed. Walpole himself had profited by the incident in more than power alone. He had made a lot of money out of South Sea shares by buying them when cheap and selling them out dear just before the final crash. No doubt he too had acted upon inside knowledge, and it is scarcely the mark of an

¹ As a matter of fact, it proved impossible to pay off a tenth part of the whole.

honest politician to turn such opportunities to private gain. But Walpole was not an honest politician, neither was he on the other hand at the time of the transaction a minister of the Crown. He was not quite such a fool as that.

In Walpole's ministry, lasting though it did for over twenty years, we shall look for no great or heroic measures of beneficent reform. England herself he left much as he found her. Abroad he was willing to do anything, however humiliating, to keep the precious peace. Yet Walpole had his mission none the less, and that mission, as might have been expected, dealt with finance and trade. He was, as must never be forgotten, a Whig, and, since the days when Shaftesbury had first founded the great party, the interests of the Whigs had always been intimately joined with the rich class of shopkeepers and merchants who had formed the backbone of the opposition to the Stuarts. Walpole, moreover, saw more clearly than did most that England's future depended on her trade. Hitherto the main idea of English politicians had been to make this country the sole market for colonial produce; and to this end the Navigation Act had laid it down that goods from English colonies should be carried exclusively on English ships or to the ports of England. Walpole aimed, however, at more than this. He aspired to making England the market of the world, and to achieve his purpose he thought it indispensable to remove some of the barriers which checked and hampered trade. Up to his time the taxation levied upon imports and exports was not merely stringent, but almost universal. A duty was levied at the waterside on practically everything that left our shores or entered them; for the welfare of home industries was thought to be best served by keeping foreign manufactures out and our own raw materials in. Walpole endeavoured, as far as he was able, to initiate a change. From over a hundred articles of export and nearly forty articles of import he removed the tax entirely. But he had another project still. This was his famous proposal to drop in certain cases the customs duty upon importation, and to

substitute an "Excise duty" upon mere consumption. With a view to making England the central depôt of European commerce he proposed to admit tea, coffee, wines, and tobacco duty free. If they were subsequently consumed in England, an "Excise tax" was to be levied on their sale. If, however, as he himself intended, a great deal of them was re-exported to European countries, they would pass in and out of England duty free. Such a policy would doubtless have brought to England a vastly increased volume of trade. But the idea was most unpopular throughout the country. Ignorant citizens, who already paid (though indirectly) a customs duty on spirits and tobacco at the port, could not abide the notion of an excise officer who would take a toll on every glass of wine they drank and on every pipe they smoked. The Englishman's liberties appeared to be invaded. A general cry was raised. Riots took place, and Walpole went almost in danger of his life. With characteristic tact he bowed before the storm. The Excise Bill was passed for tea and coffee; but for spirits and tobacco it was eventually withdrawn. Perhaps, if the truth were known, the public had its reasons for resentment. Smuggling of taxed articles was at the time extraordinarily common, so that a large bulk of these commodities did in fact escape the vigilance of the customs-house official and come into the country duty free. It would have been less easy to elude the excise-man's watch upon the warehouse and the tavern; and many were well content that, once the obnoxious proposal had been defeated, the smuggler's illicit trade should go merrily on. English liberty demanded at least the privilege to cheat the law.

Though failing in this single measure, Walpole succeeded with the rest; and, in the long run, his policy built up a British commerce which has made us the envy of the world. Even the immediate results were nothing short of marvellous. In five-and-twenty years the total of British exports more than doubled. The trade with Jamaica alone at the end of that short period was very

nearly equal to the entire trade with our American plantations just before it. Walpole had made the start; and his efforts towards Free Trade laid down the first foundations on which the later Whigs and still more recent Liberals were subsequently to build. While other nations have kept up protective tariffs and fostered domestic industries by penalising imports, England has flung wide her doors to the commerce of the world; and, whatever men may think of the present wisdom of this policy, none can deny that in the past it has given us an incalculable advantage over our rivals and competitors in the great race for trade.

II

Walpole's era was a time of peace bridging the interval between two periods of great wars. It was also a time of great prosperity; and the London of his day was a merry, bustling, energetic place. The sins of the Whigs sat lightly on its conscience; and Londoners had too much else to think about. Those who were not occupied in getting rich were occupied in talking; and conversation was the art peculiar to the age. Clubs at this date were rare; but taverns and coffee-houses did duty in their stead. There all the wits foregathered, gossiped away the time in brilliant chatter, or read the meagre sheets which told the news. Politics were now safe subject for discussion; and even the pen was no longer an instrument men feared to handle. Both Whigs and Tories kept their hireling writers who delivered fierce and venomous attacks in ink upon the opposing party. These appeared in newspapers, or more commonly in pamphlets, and the "pamphleteer," as he was called, was among the most powerful forces of the day. Some of them were inimitable masters of the English tongue and have passed into the roll of literary fame. There was Sir Richard Steele for instance, the dissipated, tippling, loveable "Dick," who received a title from the Whig government for the services he rendered, and who yet was seldom out of debt, being quite unable to keep a

penny in his pocket. Side by side with Steele was his friend and fellow-writer, the courtly, gentle-mannered Joseph Addison. His reputation was first made by a poem entitled "The Campaign," written at the Whig ministers' request to celebrate the victory of Blenheim. Its success—far greater than its merit—brought Addison at once to the fore. He was given various posts under the Whig government, and under King George I became Secretary of State. But his real claim to fame lay in his prose writings. He and Steele combined in editing a journal first called the "Tatler," and later the "Spectator," which may well be called the parent of the modern periodical or magazine. The "Spectator" was a small and modest news-sheet, issued three times weekly at the price of a single penny; but it invariably contained an essay upon current or literary topics, and these essays must always rank among the most perfect in the language. One series, written round the character of an imaginary squire, Sir Roger de Coverley by name, depicts the life and habits of the eighteenth-century gentleman seen at his best. It is a pleasant antidote to the unedifying story of Whig politics to follow the daily life of this honest, benevolent and dignified old man, as he attends the quarter-sessions at the neighbouring township, goes to Sunday morning service at his parish church, inspects the monuments and tombs of Westminster Abbey, or takes a turn upon the water to see the sights of Kew. A more ardent and outspoken Whig supporter than Addison or Steele was a man best known as the author of "Robinson Crusoe," Daniel Defoe. Defoe was a prince and father among journalists. He wrote innumerable pamphlets in an inimitable slap-dash style without too scrupulous regard for accuracy or truth; and once he was placed in the pillory (though happily not pelted) for an indiscreet attack upon the Church. As a writer of semi-historical fiction like "Robinson Crusoe," or of semi-fictitious history such as his "Journal of the Plague," Defoe stands almost without rival. To pit against these three Whig pen-drivers

the Tories could produce but one great genius;¹ but he was more than a match for all the three. Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin, was the most tremendous controversialist of his own or any other age. Cursed with the fieriest of tempers, and a sour melancholic disposition which bordered at times upon the verge of madness, Swift could throw into the words he wrote more blasting irony and biting sarcasm than any man perhaps that ever lived. It is as though his very pen had been dipped in vinegar and gall. Even the tale of Gulliver in Lilliput, by which he is best known, was itself a scantily veiled satire upon the politics and morals of his age. In another famous essay he suggested with every appearance of solemnity that superfluous Irish babies might be used to great advantage to supplement the scanty fare of their impoverished parents. Himself a disappointed and embittered man, he vented his spleen by depicting human nature in its most unpleasant and repulsive light.

The age which produced Swift, Addison, and Steele, was not merely in the special sense an age of prose. In its matter-of-fact and even cynical outlook upon life, it was also essentially a prosaic age. Emotions and enthusiasms were scoffed at. Poetry did not thrive; and the one man whom everybody hailed as a true poet, Alexander Pope, was really little more than a supremely gifted versifier. Pope could turn a neat and pointed couplet, no man better; and he turned them by the thousand all in the same metre, which we call (by a singular misnomer) the "Heroic" couplet. He could play with words and use them as his puppets; but there was no divine fire, no depth of inspiration behind the stuff he wrote. To keep the rules of poetry was more to him than poetry itself; and the fashion which he set was followed by every one who called himself a poet. These men studied the rules of composition, rhyme, and scansion, till they thought of nothing but the rules; and, being generally great scholars and readers of the classics, the

¹ Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, a returned exile, was an equally bitter, and scarcely less brilliant, literary opponent of the Whigs.

model which they copied was the poetry of Greece and Rome. Plays were written in the classic manner of Sophocles or Terence. Odes were composed in imitation of Horace or satires in the vein of Juvenal. And, as at the first Renaissance, the affectation of the old pagan phraseology was once more saddled upon English style. With these men the sun was no more the simple "sun," but the "Phaëthon" or "Phœbus". A wood became a "grove," where "Dryads" and not English fairies danced. A young lady was invariably referred to as a "nymph". Literature, in a word, became stilted and unreal; and, as time went on, even our prose itself became contaminated with this meaningless classical tradition. It became the fashion to use long cumbrous words derived out of the Latin in preference to simple straightforward Anglo-Saxon words which would have served much better. As the age of Walpole drew to its close, there came a young journalist to London who was to carry this unfortunate tendency much further still. Samuel Johnson was a vigorous and honest thinker; but he it was, more perhaps than any one else, who developed and popularised this artificial style of "Latinising" prose. His writing is grandiose, involved and overloaded by pompous rhetorical "classicisms".¹ In his great Dictionary, for instance, itself an invaluable work of stupendous industry and learning, he can find no better words in which to define a net than these: "a texture woven together with large interstices or meshes". The unconscious pedantry of such a definition sounds worse than foolish beside the Irishman's quaint, but far more picturesque description, "a lot of holes tied together by a piece of string". But that was Johnson's way. He always wrote himself like a ponderous lexicographer; and, as somebody once said about his characters, "he made the little fishes talk like whales". The artificial style which he helped to make so popular ran on through Gibbon the historian and other Georgian writers till it has barely ceased in our own days to hamper and corrupt the

¹ This and the preceding sentence are good illustrations of a vocabulary drawn almost entirely from the Latin.

natural vigour of our native tongue. Happily, however, for his reputation, Johnson did not talk as Johnson wrote. In conversation he could call a spade a spade, and not an "agricultural implement". Of a drama he could say quite simply "it has not wit enough to keep it sweet," even though the desire to give his phrase a more literary turn compelled the crabbed addition, "it has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction". It was not often, however, that his second thoughts were so ill-inspired as that. For as a talker he was marvellous, brimful of illustrations, metaphors and ideas, and never at a loss for a retort. His glorious sense of humour and his transparent honesty of purpose endeared him to a host of famous friends. All the great ones of the day gathered about Johnson—Garrick the actor, Sheridan the playwright, Goldsmith the novelist and poet, Reynolds the court-painter, Burke, Gibbon, Fox, and the man who made his own name great no less than Johnson's by the immortal biography he wrote of him, James Boswell. This brilliant circle met and talked and argued sometimes in the famous "Mitre Tavern," sometimes at the homes of the members of their "Club". But, whoever else was there, Johnson always reigned as their "unquestioned king". In his more truculent moods he could be a bully and a tyrant, brooking no contradiction, never acknowledging defeat and ready enough with the uncompromising retort of "Sir, you lie". A ruder man than Johnson never stepped, but beneath his rough exterior he had a heart of gold; and for that men honoured him and loved him. Himself as honest as the day, he expected honesty in others, and never shrank from exposing hypocrisy or cant. The hypocrisy of Whigs (since he was himself a thorough-going Tory) he took peculiar pleasure in denouncing; and he never truckled after the servile fashion of the times to either wealth or rank. Over that town society, corrupted by its artificial standards and cynical contempt for all ideals, Johnson's vigorous championship of truth, honour, and religion passed like a healthy wind from country fields. In him the true spirit of England found its

best expression ; and though the national virtues of pluck, plain-speaking, and broad commonsense were also in him accompanied by the characteristic English failure to recognise the merits or the value of any other race, yet a narrow patriotism is better than none at all ; and Samuel Johnson has a better title to be called a typical citizen of eighteenth-century England than many a man to whom the world awarded more solid recognition or a loftier pride of place.

CHAPTER VI

GREATER BRITAIN BEYOND THE SEAS

WHILE Walpole was engaged in reorganising our national finances, and the idle wits of London carelessly gossiped of a thousand other things, war-clouds were meantime gathering over Europe which were to startle even the Whigs from their complacent slumber and strike England broad awake. The first bout of these new hostilities, which lasted from 1740 to 1748, was at most a half-hearted business; but the Seven Years' War soon followed (1756-63), and in that our whole fortune was at hazard. The issue thus soon to be determined was nothing less than the mastery of distant continents; and during those years the British Empire was to be lost or won. Great fabrics spring often from insignificant beginnings; and, though our overseas possessions then at stake formed but a precarious foothold on the edge of vast unknowns—here a scattered group of exiled colonists, there a slave-plantation or a traders' post; yet these were the germs from which sprung a Greater Britain, destined to raise new nations into being or to tame and civilise the savage ways of old. And, before we turn to the story of the struggle which decided once and for all that these far-off lands should rest in our possession, it is well worth while to consider briefly how they ever came to be in our possession at all.

There fall first, however, one or two observations to be made concerning the general character and method of these foreign acquisitions. In the first place, they came to us, not as the result of a deliberate and far-sighted plan, but largely at haphazard. State encouragement, it is true,

was frequently behind them. The King or Queen lent sometimes ships, more rarely money; and at least bestowed a vague blessing on the enterprise. But the whole initiative lay in reality with private individuals—whether a single enthusiast like Raleigh or the members of some joint-stock London company; and it was the personal audacity of generation after generation of adventurous Englishmen that established these early settlements long years before the English Government gave serious thought to their maintenance, protection, or development. In the second place, we were very far from having the new continents entirely to ourselves. Spain and Portugal were in the field before us; and, thanks to the Pope's obliging dispensation, held a prior claim, as it were, to their possession. Thus the area open, even to our earliest pioneers, was confined and narrowed down. The African coast was largely under Portuguese control; and in South America the Spaniards had carried their conquests far and wide. The virgin soil awaiting our more tardy enterprise lay, therefore, in India and North America alone. Lastly, we must note that even between these two fields still awaiting trade and settlement there existed a wide and striking difference. India, on the one hand, was populous and hot. It had neither the climate nor the space to attract English settlers in large numbers; so there the chief opening was for trading depots only. North America, upon the other hand, offered better prospects. Its air was temperate and invigorating, its population sparse; so Englishmen in search of a new home turned more naturally across the waves of the Atlantic. North America accordingly became the scene of our earliest experiments in colonisation proper; and to North America we will first turn our eyes.

NORTH AMERICA

Age of Exploration.—The history of English enterprise beyond the Atlantic falls into two clearly defined periods. The first, which covered practically the whole of the

sixteenth century, was occupied in voyages of piracy and exploration; and it was not until that century was drawing to its close that any real attempt at permanent settlement was made. During those early and exciting days when scarcely a year passed without the discovery of some new land, we had not failed to take a leading part. It was a mere accident—due to the miscarriage of a letter—that Henry VII was too late to accept the offer of Columbus's services and that Columbus himself did not make his celebrated voyage under the English flag. Isabella of Castile secured that honour, and its fruition went to Spain. But, though the credit of discovering South America was thus forfeited to us, it was nevertheless a Bristol man, John Cabot, a Genoese by birth, whose search for an Atlantic route to India brought him, some five years later, against the forelands of the northern continent. During the century which followed this success our sailors never rested. Chanceller and Willoughby explored the Arctic Ocean for a north-east passage to the Orient; and Frobisher, the Yorkshireman, scoured the Greenland coasts for a north-western route. Meantime in southern waters there was piracy in plenty. The two Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake were busy making things uncomfortable for Spain. They looted Spanish galleons homeward bound; they pounced unexpectedly on Spanish ports; they even at times made daring inland raids on Spanish trade-preserves. What none, however, of these men attempted was to capture land for England. It was not till 1583 that Sir Humphrey Gilbert disembarked on the Newfoundland coast, and, having in legal fashion cut a turf and taken "seizin," claimed the new possession for the English Crown. That single act was big with destiny. It marked the ending of one epoch—the epoch of Discovery. It heralded the beginning of a new—the epoch of Colonial Settlement.

Age of Colonisation.—This second period, in the course of which our North American colonies were born, falls into three main phases. Chronologically they overlap. Geographically, as the map will show, they cover each a separate

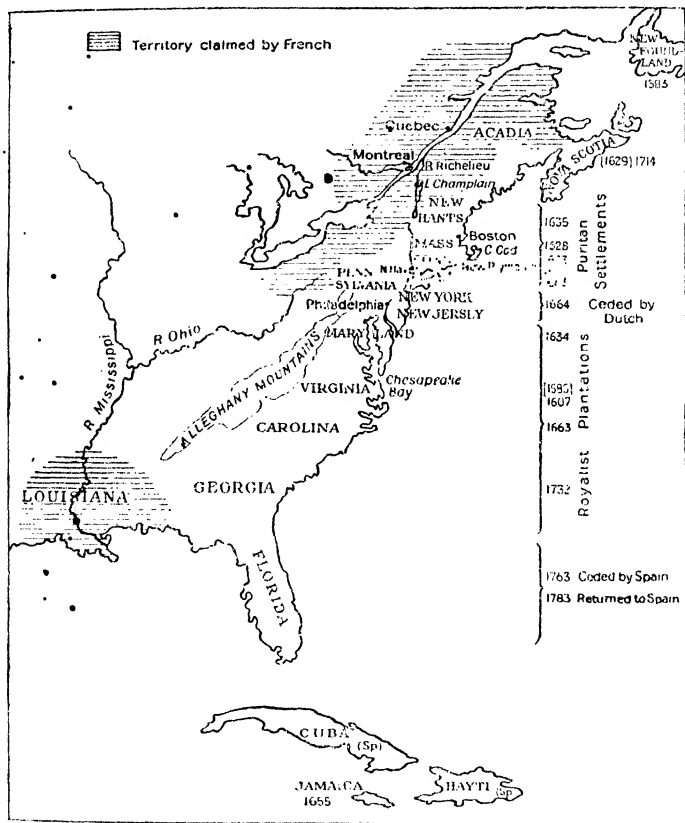
area of expansion. First came the effort to establish Plantations in the *South*—a commercial enterprise. Second came the influx of Puritan emigrants who settled *round Cape Cod*—a by-product of religious persecution. Third and last came the phase of deliberate and national aggression, in which we succeeded in linking-up and rounding-off our previous scattered holdings by annexing to ourselves the adjacent settlements of rival nations—during the seventeenth century the Spanish and the Dutch, during the eighteenth the French. The conclusion of this last phase, at the close of the Seven Years' War, left us in sole possession of the entire seaboard with complete liberty to expand westwards. North America, if only for a brief twenty years, was ours; Anglo-Saxon it has remained ever since. We must now sketch rapidly the story of these phases.

First Phase.—Sir Humphrey Gilbert, the man who planted the English flag upon Newfoundland, was lost at sea during his homeward voyage; but his colonising zeal was happily, in a large measure, shared by his half-brother and friend, Sir Walter Raleigh. Despite his eagerness to found a colony Raleigh was not permitted to embark himself; but two years after Sir Humphrey Gilbert's death he organised and dispatched an expedition for this purpose. The expedition pitched upon a spot somewhat south of the centre of the western seaboard and near the great inlet of Chesapeake Bay. As a tactful compliment to the Virgin Queen, his mistress, Raleigh's new colony was named Virginia. But this was not sufficient to ensure success. The first batch of settlers soon came home; and though a second batch was presently sent out they perished without trace. So the Virgin Queen's dominion went untenanted till she herself had died. Then, in 1607, a group of London merchants reopened the attempt. Serious mistakes were made. The "gentlemen" adventurers wasted much precious time in the fruitless search for imaginary gold-mines. Fever set in; and the party almost perished, when, in the nick of time, a man came out to pull the colony together. Captain John Smith, a boastful, breezy

seaman, knew the methods which were needed. He set the "gentlemen" to work, sowed corn, built timber-houses, and even (if we may trust his story) softened the "cannibal" instincts of the Red Indian chieftain by making love to his dusky daughter! John Smith's arrival was, in fact, the turning-point. After various ups and downs the colony succeeded. The land was parcelled out among settlers. Women were sent out to furnish them with wives; and, above all, the great discovery was made that Virginia was excellent soil to grow tobacco. Fifty years later, at the time of the Restoration, the population had mounted to 40,000 souls. The success of this plantation led naturally to others. In the reign of Charles I an extension was made northward, under the influence of Lord Baltimore, and, in honour of Charles's Queen, Henrietta Maria, was named Maryland. In the reign of Charles II a similar extension was effected to the south and christened Carolina, after Charles. It remained for Oglethorpe, in the reign of George II, to carry our boundary further south to the very border of Spanish Florida. This new addition was called Georgia; and with that the first phase ends.

These four Plantations, Virginia, Maryland, Carolina, and Georgia were, broadly speaking, all of a type. Each was founded under the patronage of the Crown. Each was named, as we have seen, after a king or a queen; and the men who founded and who managed them were mostly Royalists by sympathy and not seldom Catholics by religion. But, more than this, the purpose which they served was one throughout. They were commercial undertakings, run in the interests of the main proprietors. There was no very particular inducement to take the ordinary Englishman across to fill them, and sufficient labour was not easy to procure. The only alternative, therefore, was to introduce slave labour; and throughout the Seventeenth Century there was continual transportation of West African negroes across the Atlantic to America. It is said that some 20,000 were commonly taken over in one year (though not to English colonies alone), and the horrors of the "Trade" were

indescribable. The unhappy negroes of the Guinea coast, kidnapped by English raiders or purchased from the Portuguese and Dutch, were packed like sardines into special



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE COLONISATION OF NORTH AMERICA

vessels, where they sat huddled in rows, half starving and often shackled to their seats. Thousands upon thousands died during the voyage: but even such a fate was preferable to the lot of their fellows who survived. Housed in filthy

barracks, and set to work in gangs under the lash of brutal task-masters, they spent their miserable days in hoeing rice-fields, tending tobacco plants, or harvesting the sugarcane. The colonies thrived upon the produce of their labours; but no wonder we are told that many of the slaves died young. The evil tradition lasted long. It survived the secession of the colonies from England and their independent existence as the United States; and only as recently as 1865 did Abraham Lincoln and the Northern States defeat the Southern States and compel them to abandon it.

Second Phase.—The Northern States which won the "Civil War" and enforced this act of justice, were originally peopled by a very different stock and in a very different manner from the Plantation States of the South. To face the rigours of the colder climate, where winter brought often continuous frost and snow and bitter winds, called for the most sterling qualities of English grit; nor could the requisite determination and endurance have anywhere been better found than in that class of shopkeepers and yeomen who upheld the great cause of civil and religious freedom against the tyranny of the Stuarts. Men who for conscience sake would exchange a comfortable home in England for the inhospitable wilderness of these northern coasts were the stuff of which true pioneers are made; and never did pioneers accomplish their work better than the Puritan emigrants who crossed the ocean during the seventeenth century.

The first experiment was on a tiny scale. In 1620 two ships, the "Mayflower," and the "Speedwell," set out together, manned by a party of Lincolnshire dissenters who had for some years previously been sheltering in Holland. The "Speedwell" met with an accident and was forced to put back to port; but the "Mayflower" persevered and eventually struck land some 500 miles to the northward of Virginia, and disembarked about a hundred souls in the neighbourhood of Cape Cod. The settlers christened their settlement New Plymouth after the port

in England at which they had last touched. They chose a governor, and appointed Miles Standish as military commander. A constitution was furthermore drawn up, and they organised their small community on strictly socialistic lines. All were to share and share alike in the produce of their toil. Nevertheless, for these brave idealists there were troublous times ahead. Food was scarce. The labour was severe; and sickness thinned their ranks. Worse still, the selfishness of human nature hampered the smooth development of their socialistic schemes; and only then did the colony begin to thrive when the strict rules were relaxed and every man was permitted to enjoy the fruit of his own toil. Meanwhile the situation of their fellow Puritans at home had gone from bad to worse; and the persecutions of Archbishop Laud produced in 1630 a fresh wave of emigrants. East Anglians for the most part, they founded Massachusetts and gave to its capital the name of Boston, in memory of the port in Lincolnshire. By 1641, when the Civil War broke out and checked the flow, some 20,000 persons had passed over the Atlantic; and some, more adventurous than the rest, had pushed inland and founded the further settlements of Connecticut and New Haven.

The group of four Puritan colonies thus founded, called two by English and two by Indian names, formed now a fairly solid and united whole. There were religious differences, it is true, and some extremists of the "Independent" type went off to Rhode Island and there founded a colony in which complete liberty of worship might be practised. The rest, however, worked well enough together for a time. They developed a lively trade in fur, salt fish, and timber with the Virginian group of colonists and with the mother-country. For purposes of government the four settlements united in a confederacy or league, each sending delegates from its own Parliament to consult for the common interest of the whole. Joint action was especially desirable in matters of defence. The native Indians were a menace from which they were seldom free. Lithe figures flitted

shadow-like 'behind the forest tree-trunks; painted faces peered at them through the thick undergrowth; and sometimes, when their watch was momentarily relaxed, there would come a sudden raid; the tomahawk would claim its victims, and there were tales of hideous torture inflicted on unhappy whites who fell into the red men's hands. Nor was the Indian the only enemy. To the south the Dutch had planted a colony in the long gap which divided the Puritans from the Virginian group; and to the north the French were busy exploring the St. Lawrence Valley, and ambitiously pushing inland on their rear. Such rival activities could not go long unobserved, and even the English government took note of them. This brings us to our third and final phase, the phase of national conquest.

Third Phase.—Neither the Tudors nor yet the early Stuarts had thought it necessary to take a very active part in overseas expansion. They had given the colonists approval, sometimes provided ships; but left the rest to private enterprise. No official campaigns were undertaken on the far side of the Atlantic until Cromwell came. His policy, however, was much more ambitious; and during his war with Spain (1655) he sent a fleet across under Penn and Venables to operate among the West Indian Islands. Of these islands the only two which reach considerable size, Cuba and Hispaniola (otherwise known as Hayti or San Domingo), were already in Spanish hands. But a much smaller one, Jamaica, though claimed, had not been colonised; and against it the English Admirals, ignominiously repulsed at Hispaniola, delivered a second and more successful attack. The island fell to them almost without a blow, and has remained in our possession ever since. At first it was chiefly valued as a convenient base from which our buccaneers—Henry Morgan and the rest—could prey upon the Spanish ports and trade routes. As time went on, however, the sugar industry was started, and, thanks to slave-labour and the tropical conditions, thrived exceedingly. By the middle of the eighteenth century Jamaica had become the most productive of our

western settlements. Cromwell's new policy of colonial conquest was not allowed to drop; and, when in Charles II's reign we went to war against the Dutch, we took the opportunity to grab their North American possessions (1664). Occupying as these did the vacant space between our northern and our southern settlements, their capture enabled us to bridge the awkward gap and link up the Puritans and planters in one continuous line. By way of compliment to the Duke, King Charles's brother, one part of this new addition was re-named New York; the more southern part became New Jersey.

The tendency to push inland, of which we spoke a little while ago, was now continued. In 1682 the quaker William Penn, son of the Admiral and a protégé of King Charles, was allowed a grant of land lying westwards of New York, and there he founded on religious lines a colony known, after himself, as Pennsylvania. But we were not, as it so happened, the only nation that was pushing westwards. The French also were making a bid for the interior; and they even threatened to be before us in the race. As early as the middle of the sixteenth century French explorers had sailed up the St. Lawrence River; and, about the same time as we were colonising Virginia, they colonised Acadia (or Nova Scotia as we call it) at the St. Lawrence mouth. Soon after a young French sailor named Champlain had founded the city of Quebec, and, despite the opposition of unfriendly Indians, French traders had pushed still further up the river and established a settlement at Montreal. It was not, however, till the reign of Louis XIV that the colony began to forge ahead. Colbert, the great Minister who was Mazarin's successor, perceived its possibilities and laid far-reaching schemes. Settlers were sent out. Quebec and Montreal were fortified; and a vigorous exploration of the interior was begun. The result was startling. In 1682 a Frenchman named La Salle moved up past the Great Lakes, struck south to the upper reaches of the Ohio, travelled down it till he reached the Mississippi, and so emerged at the opposite end of the continent, upon the

Gulf of Mexico. As a crowning touch to this stupendous feat, he claimed the lower basin of the Mississippi for the King of France and dubbed it Louisiana. How great a menace to our coastal settlements was here foreshadowed is obvious enough. By working south from Canada and north from Louisiana, the French could encircle us, pin us at any rate to the seaboard, and some day maybe crush us altogether out; and, had their numbers been at all proportionate to their ambitions, such must have been our fate. But the French as a people did not take kindly to the task of colonisation; few volunteers went out as settlers; and the effort from first to last came almost wholly from the Government. Even so a manifest advantage lay with a Government which at least knew its mind. The French worked upon one plan dictated from Versailles. The English colonists, upon the other hand, lacked a united policy. Jealousies distracted them, and even the confederacy of the four Puritan states had by now been broken up; and the home Government afforded them no clear lead. The result was that by the middle of the eighteenth century the French, after various border wars and skirmishes, had gained the upper hand. They had won the friendship and even the alliance of many Indian tribes. These they were prepared, if necessary, to use in war; and they had garrisons of their own, commanded by officers sent out from France. Meanwhile their grip over the disputed hinter-land was growing yearly tighter; and a scheme was now afoot to construct a chain of forts down southwards from the lakes and along the valley of the Ohio. Such a design, had it succeeded, would have secured the whole hinter-land for France. In other words, the crisis was fast approaching by which should be decided the future of the northern continent. Whether France or England should possess it hung uncertain. Then England awoke from her slumber. Fate still held out the offer and it was grasped by Pitt.

INDIA

Compared with America, India was, as we have said, a thickly-peopled country. It was a country with an ancient and historic past. Its civilisation, though of an Oriental type, was already centuries old. Its numerous races were strangely intermingled and confused by a long series of immigrations. The bulk of the inhabitants were Hindus, a feeble backward race that had been settled in India since the earliest times of which record has come down. Their religion, a curious mixture of belief in one and many gods, had concentrated all the power in the hands of their chiefs and priests. The masses, ignorant, impassive, and superstitious as they were, had been taught to render a servile homage and obedience to the sacred caste of Brahmins, or, as the claim was, "god-born" holy men. For the folk of lower caste to marry a Brahmin, handle the food or water that a Brahmin was to swallow, touch him, or even approach within measurable distance of his person, was utterly forbidden; and the observance of these religious laws about pollution had become the principal rule of a Hindu's existence. No race perhaps in the whole world has suffered more utter degradation from the abuse of class. But this was not all; for in the course of time the Hindu peoples had been forced to submit to yet other masters besides Brahmins. About the same epoch as the Norman conquest, when the Turks were occupied in overrunning Palestine and capturing Jerusalem, a similar zeal for conquest had arisen among their fellow-Mohammedans in Central Asia. Hordes of these fierce fanatics had swept south over the mountains which encircle India and taken possession of its plains. The conquest brought no peace. All through the middle ages princes rose and fell, fought and murdered one another, and preyed the while upon the helpless, long-suffering Hindus beneath them. At length in 1526 a last great Mussulman conqueror descended upon the distracted country from the north. Babar, the "Mongol," after a couple of fierce battles brought the whole of Northern

India under his sway and founded the famous line of Mogul emperors. Ruling from Delhi as their capital, and surrounded by a court of such luxury and splendour as even the Orient has seldom witnessed, these cruel and grasping tyrants lorded it over India for just on two hundred years. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, however, their star was waning fast. A bloodthirsty race of Hindu mountaineers, named the Mahrattas, was openly defying their authority, and its marauder bands were spreading terror and devastation far and wide. In 1707 died Aurungzebe, last of the great Mogul potentates, and with his death the mighty fabric of their Empire collapsed like a pack of cards. The Nabobs or provincial viceroys of the Mogul emperors continued here and there to maintain an independent throne—in Oude, Bengal, the Carnatic, and elsewhere. But the glory had departed. All semblance of unity was gone; chaos reigned. India awaited a new master, and England's hour had struck.

As in the case of America, we had first gone to India for the sake of trade; and here too, as there, another nation was before us. The earliest European¹ to circumnavigate the Cape and cross the Indian Ocean had been a Portuguese, Vasco da Gama by name; and the discovery had given to his countrymen a virtual monopoly of Indian trade. Throughout the sixteenth century the spices and delicacies of the East had been conveyed to Europe in Portuguese "carracks" or merchantmen; and the growing chain of Portuguese trade depots on the coasts of Africa and India had brought immense prosperity to that small race. It was not, however, fated to last long. Shortly before the year of the Armada Portugal had been merged under the crown of Spain; and she shared Spain's swift decline. India was now open to the competition of the world, and three nations entered for the prize. First, in the year 1600 there was launched in London city that famous speculative venture—the most momentous perhaps of all commercial undertakings

¹ Greek and Phœnician travellers had in ancient days performed this voyage.

in our history—the East India Company. The merchants who founded it built better than they knew; for upon this slender foundation has risen in the lapse of time that great Empire which to-day controls the destiny of three hundred million souls. For a century or more, however, the enterprise remained upon a modest scale. Trading ports or “factories,” as they were called, were started at three points—at Surat in what is now the province of Bombay, at Madras and Fort St. David on the lower eastern coast, and at Fort William or Calcutta near the mouth of the river Hugli in the province of Bengal. Trade was brisk; for to these depots the natives gladly brought their wares—spices, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, pepper, and such like commodities. The Mogul potentates or their provincial governors looked with no unfriendly eye upon the useful strangers and the profits of the Company steadily increased. But, as we have said, there were other rivals in the field; first the Dutch, who held, and still hold to this day, many ports among the islands of the East Indian Archipelago—Java, Sumatra, the Moluccas, and at that time Ceylon; later, and more formidable by far, the French. For the French, like our own merchants, had settled on the mainland. Their headquarters were at Chandernagore, hard by Calcutta, and at Pondicherry, barely a hundred miles distant from Madras. The two rival companies were thus working cheek by jowl, and, as may easily be imagined, there was small love lost between them.

Such was the position when in the early years of the eighteenth century the last great Mohammedan ruler, Aurungzebe, died, and the Mogul Empire went to bits. With that same quick instinct for an opportunity which they had shown in their Canadian enterprise, the French officials soon grasped the situation. They cultivated many tactful friendships with the now independent Nabobs of the old Mogul provinces, and even sheltered them, when need arose, against their powerful enemies, the Mahratta hordes. Their power thus grew apace; and in 1741 there came out from France a governor who was to reduce this new diplomacy

to a fine art. If any man deserved to conquer India, it was Dupleix. Far ahead of his age and with vast schemes revolving in his busy brain, he set to work to build up a French influence equal and more than equal to our own. He made alliances with friendly Nabobs and supported claimants to disputed thrones. He paraded himself in native dress to impress the native eye and vied with Oriental princes in the splendour of his pomp. He enlisted whole regiments of native soldiery, and, what is more, he summoned out from home French officers to drill them. In the face of such activity the English Company lagged far behind. As with America, the home authorities remained completely blind to the dangers of the situation. The only British troops in India—besides a handful of sepoys—were a couple of hundred Europeans in the Company's employ. The only man worthy to win the title of an officer was occupied at the time in adding up accounts as a junior Company's clerk. So true is it that Fortune deals kindly with our habitual bungling, and that England, as they say, has won her Empire "in a fit of absence of mind".

CHAPTER VII

THE WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION

ALTHOUGH in 1739 the chain of French forts upon the Ohio had not as yet been planned, and although two years still remained before Dupleix should arrive at Pondicherry, yet in either quarter the threats of French hostilities were scarcely veiled. "France the enemy" was written so large and so obtrusively over the course events were taking in three continents that not even Walpole himself could have been wholly blind to the menace. War was in the air. Yet during the last twenty years nothing whatsoever had been done to prepare for its arrival. Our army had been reduced to a mere handful. Our fleet, though somewhat better, was still inadequate; and (most lamentable perhaps of all) we had not a friend in Europe. Such was the result of Walpole's policy of drift or *laissez faire*. France on her part, however, had never let things bide, and she was now working hand in glove with Spain to oust us from our position on the seas. Though Louis XIV himself was dead and gone, his great-grandson, Louis XV,¹ was now seated on the throne, while his grandson, Philip, had been King of Spain since the Treaty of Utrecht. The two kinsmen monarchs had naturally enough a secret understanding, and on the strength of it Spain was beginning to make herself unpleasant to ourselves. "Peaceful" English merchants, trading in South American waters, were subjected to all sorts of interference. Rumour had it that some had actually been arrested,

¹ Both his son, the Dauphin, and his grandson had died in rapid succession.

tortured, and imprisoned. Feeling ran high in London, and when a certain Captain Jenkins appeared one day before the House of Commons and produced, neatly wrapped in cotton wool, an ear, said to have been lost in an affray with Spanish coastguards, public indignation burst all bounds. The war fever swept Walpole off his feet. Against his better judgment and very much against his taste, he sent our ships across to attack the offending Spaniards in the west. He scored an initial triumph by the capture of the town of Portobello, he met with a severe rebuff at Carthage, muddled on half-heartedly for three years more, and finally in 1742 retired from office amid the jeers of the vulgar populace and to the genuine relief of all good patriots. So fell the great "Peace Minister," and so ended the peace which he had so assiduously preserved for nearly a quarter of a century. If war was what men wanted, they were very soon to have their belly-ful. "They ring the bells now," Walpole had said at the first outbreak of hostilities, "presently they will be wringing their hands"; and he was right.

The war with Spain dragged on, but that France, not Spain, was the true enemy was clearly seen by the man who now took from Walpole's hands the control of our affairs. John Carteret knew Europe like a book. For a Whig of his time, he had an amazingly wide outlook, and, what was odder still, he was entirely honest. In the dirty game of party politics he took no interest whatsoever, and, instead of devoting all his energies to strengthening the Whig position at Westminster, he desired rather to strengthen England's position in the world before the final day of reckoning came with France. So, whereas Walpole had chosen to ignore the continent, Carteret would not. He revived the old policy of the earlier Whigs—the policy of Marlborough, King William, and the rest—to *keep France down in Europe by keeping the Empire up*. In this way and in this way only could the balance of power be properly maintained, and, if such had been our necessary safeguard in the past, it was doubly necessary now. Throughout the

wars of William and of Marlborough our interests had long been rooted in alliance with Austria and the German States, and, now that the King of England was ruler of Hanover as well, fresh ties of mutual interest had been forged. England and Germany—a united Germany—must stand together against French aggression. Such was the dream and goal of Carteret's diplomacy.

But Carteret came too late, and his was an empty dream. For, shortly before his entry into power, two events had happened which, between them, shattered it to smithereens. First, in 1740, the old Austrian Emperor died and, dying, left all his vast dominions to a girl. That it was a dangerous experiment was obvious, and, anticipating trouble, the Emperor had taken such precautions as he could. By a treaty, entitled the "Pragmatic Sanction," he had got the European powers to guarantee the safe succession of his daughter, and she, Maria Theresa, thus entered upon her heritage unchallenged. Yet the difficulties before her were immense. "Emperor" of the German States she clearly could not be, and even her husband's claim was more than doubtful. Her scattered dominions—Austria, Bohemia, the Lower Netherlands, Naples, and Milan¹—possessed no unity, no cohesion for defence. Half of them were exposed to an attack from Spain or France, and both Spain and France regarded them with avaricious eyes. These two were powerful enemies; yet Maria's greatest danger was to come from neither Spain nor France. It came from the ambitions of a fellow German prince. In the same year that the old Emperor died there had succeeded to the throne of Brandenburg and Prussia a young man whose name was Frederic. Now, for one very good reason, Frederic was not likely to prove a comfortable neighbour to Maria. His father, Frederic William, had been possessed by a sort of military mania, and had devoted his life to collecting giants from every land in Europe to form his famous regiment of Potsdam Guards. The son, who shared

¹ The three last-named provinces had been ceded by Spain to Austria under the Treaty of Utrecht.

his father's taste for soldiers, thus inherited along with it a formidable army; nor was he slow to find a use to which to put it. Frederic was one of those men who either make or ruin nations. He was conscious of his own military genius; he was equally confident in the strength of his new army; and it was impossible for him to rest content with the inglorious rôle of a petty German princeling. His life's ambition was to make the names of Frederic and of Prussia feared in Europe; and in this he certainly succeeded. He shrank from no violence, robbery, or intrigue which might assist him in fulfilling his desires. He feared the laws of neither God nor man; and the results of his audacity are with us still. Frederic not merely founded the power of modern Prussia, he conceived and handed down to his descendants the doctrine of modern Prussianism that might is right. He was the model no less than the ancestor of the Kaiser Wilhelm II. To such a man the weak are natural prey, and the accession of the young Maria Theresa awoke in him the appetite for conquest. Frederic cared nothing that his word was already pledged by the Pragmatic Sanction to support her title to the throne. Treaties to him were merely "scraps of paper"; and before many weeks were out he struck his blow. He claimed from Maria—with scarcely a shadow of legality—the province of Silesia which lay upon his borders. Upon refusal he marched in his well-drilled army almost unopposed and took possession of Silesia out of hand. That blow, so swift, so unexpected, so unscrupulous, changed the whole future course of European politics.

Such was the condition of affairs with which Carteret was faced in 1742. All Europe was in arms. France, ever on the watch for what pickings she could get, had joined in the attack on helpless Austria, had agreed with Bavaria for a division of the spoils, and sent an army east along the Danube. Maria Theresa, thus beset on all sides, appealed despairingly for English help. Every consideration of chivalry and interest prompted a response to her appeal; yet succour sent to her meant enmity to Frederic, and this,

above all things, was what Carteret dreaded. He did his best. He persuaded Maria to abandon her claim upon Silesia, and thus healed in part, though only for a time, the dangerous German breach. This done, he set himself to combat France and to save, at any rate, the Austrian Netherlands. Once again, as in the days of Marlborough, an English army was dispatched to Flanders. Austrian troops joined it. A contingent from Hanover was summoned, and King George himself eventually arrived to command the united forces of his two dominions. The allied army's strategy was bold; in main outline, it was a repetition of Marlborough's march to Blenheim. But Marlborough's own genius was no longer present, and our forces came within an ace of irretrievable disaster. Leaving Flanders, they marched south along the Rhine, cut in between the two French armies campaigning against Austria, and then, thanks to the King's pig-headedness, were actually cut off themselves at Dettingen. The English infantry, however, fought far better than their leaders led. George himself showed great personal courage in the battle, and Dettingen ended in an English victory and a severe French defeat. This success notwithstanding, Prussia was still a most uncertain quantity, a more than doubtful friend: Carteret's dream of a solid coalition against France remained a castle in the air, and already the opportunity, such as it had been, was passing from his hands. His two years of power had won him neither credit nor popularity at home. Men said that he was sacrificing English interests for the interests of Hanover. Mean Whig intrigues were brought to bear against him, and, while he had never stooped to buy support in Parliament, his enemies were busy buying votes to overthrow him. In the autumn of '44 this splendid statesman fell, and with his fall all hope of permanently reuniting Austria and Prussia against France had disappeared.

The men who took Carteret's place at the head of the English Government, and who retained that place for the next dozen years, were the two Pelham brothers, the

one Henry Pelham, the other Thomas Pelham, Duke of Newcastle. Clever hands at the sordid political game of corruption and intrigue, incompetent administrators at home, and worse than incompetent abroad, they were typical of the Whig party at its worst. They spent a handsome fortune in securing their majority in Parliament; they collected round them all the brains and influence that money could command; and meanwhile they allowed England for twelve years to go steadily to the dogs. The result was that nearly everything went wrong. In '44 Frederic and Maria Theresa fell out once more and came to actual blows. In '45 the fear which had recently hung over us of a French descent upon our shores was thrown into the shade by the more immediate menace of Prince Charlie's Scottish rebellion. And how near that came to upsetting George's throne we have already seen. In the same year our forces out in Flanders were severely punished by the French Marshal Saxe at Fontenoy; soon afterwards we brought them home to England; and the Austrian Netherlands were largely overrun. In India equally we were worsted by Dupleix and lost Madras. In America alone, where our colonists achieved the capture of the French port of Louisburg, the key to the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, did we have any glimmer of success. The wonder is that, when in '48 a peace was finally patched up at Aix-la-Chapelle, we and our Allies did not come off considerably worse. We gave up Louisburg, it is true; but we got back Madras. Maria Theresa let Frederic have Silesia; but she kept the Austrian Netherlands herself. France, on the other hand, scored very little. Her trade had suffered severely from our sea-supremacy; despite her victories in Flanders, she had made no headway against Austria in the east. The fact was that, although not beaten, she was tired. The "War of the Austrian Succession" thus ended in a species of drawn fight. The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was no permanent settlement. The peace was at best a truce and barely that. During the eight years' breathing space that followed, Englishmen

and Frenchmen still squabbled, skirmished, and intrigued, in both America and India, just as if the parent countries were openly at war; and it was plain to anyone who had the eyes to see it that sooner or later—and it might be very soon—the day was coming for the renewal of the challenge. When it came the struggle would be fiercer, the issue of world empire squarely joined; and where in that coming day could England look for friends to stand at her side? This much at least was certain. The old policy begun by William, continued by Marlborough, and revived in 1742 by Carteret, was no longer possible. The Pelhams were no statesmen; but not even a statesman could now heal the deadly breach between Austria and Prussia. Frederic, by one fatal act, had upset the balance of European equilibrium. France, though so recently his ally, feared him. Austria with better reason feared him too; and, when just eight years later the great struggle was reopened, Austria and France were to be found united. Blenheim, Oudenarde and Dettingen had gone for nothing. England had lost her ally.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR

I. THE RISE OF PITT

IN the spring of 1754 Henry Pelham died ; but the tradition of incompetence lived on. His brother, Thomas Pelham, the Duke of Newcastle, took up the vacant post, bribed his way through a general election in the autumn, and settled down complacently to enjoy the sweets of office. English politics were stagnant ; and the only tangible achievement of this egregious pair of brothers was to reform the Almanac.¹ Though the long-standing error of mediæval calculations had long since been recognised by the rest of Europe, England had not accepted the correct "Gregorian Calendar" instituted by Pope Gregory in 1582. She was still in fact eleven days behind continental reckoning. In 1752, however, the Pelhams had hit upon the bright idea of falling into line. A Bill was passed through Parliament. The date was changed and the eleven days between September 3rd and 14th were cancelled. But, though the Pelham ministry might reform the calendar, they did not reform their ways. They put on the clock for other people, but they themselves remained incorrigibly behind the times. England under their influence went fast asleep. Meanwhile, in his palace at Potsdam, Frederic of Prussia was making merry with his friends. He had gathered to his court a host of foreign favourites, authors, musicians, poets, and artists ; and in

¹ Their administration was also marked by another event of some interest and importance, the founding of the British Museum.

the company of these he supped and jested, attended operas and concerts, wrote bad verses, practised the flute and fiddle. and produced, in short, a very mediocre imitation of the late lamented "grand monarch" of Versailles. So wagged the world in England and in Prussia. But such trifling was all upon the surface, hiding a deep unrest. Behind the appearance of tranquillity war-clouds were gathering. It was the lull before the storm. In the last days of '55 and the first of '56 the lightning flashed out suddenly. It had somehow come to Frederic's knowledge that a secret understanding had recently been formed between Austria, Russia, Saxony, and (if he guessed rightly) France to combine and wipe out Prussia from the map of Europe. Without a friend or ally on the continent, Frederic turned anxiously to England. To King George's delight he offered to safeguard Hanover on condition that Hanover in return should safeguard him. The bargain was concluded. A Defensive Alliance was signed—and the storm was upon us.

France, which, throughout the eight years' interval of so-called peace, had never ceased to plague us in the colonies, and now felt doubly warlike and ambitious in virtue of the new *rapprochement* with her old Austrian foe, took up the Anglo-Prussian challenge readily enough. Speed was all to her advantage, and she prepared forthwith to deal a blow at us by attacking the island of Minorca (ours by right of conquest since the Treaty of Utrecht). Minorca was for us a valuable base in Mediterranean waters. We divined the French intention, and out went a fleet under Admiral John Byng for the preservation of the precious island—only to arrive four weeks too late and to find the French already in possession. Byng showed little spirit. He refused to risk a landing, failed to make good in a brush with the French navy, and finally put back into Gibraltar beaten—and without a fight.

In England the news of Minorca's fall was received with exaggerated sensations of disgust, bewilderment, and terror. The descent of French troops upon our southern coast was

momentarily expected. Rumour ran wild; and ugly tales of disaster in our colonies fretted the public's nerve. At such a moment men will instinctively desire to find a scape-goat. There was a howl for Byng's court-martial; and the outcry took effect. The unfortunate admiral was duly tried, found guilty on the score of "not having done his utmost," and (such was then the severity of naval discipline) condemned to death. Six weeks later the House of Lords confirmed the sentence, and Byng was shot on his own quarter-deck in Portsmouth Harbour—*pour encourager les autres*, as the French cynic, Voltaire, said. Meantime, however, the prospect of Byng's blood was not enough to satisfy the indignant populace; and before he died the Newcastle Cabinet which sent him to Minorca had been bitterly assailed. Their handling of the crisis had, in fact, been dilatory and nerveless, and they had certainly not "done *their* utmost". "Five Lords meet," declared one outspoken critic;¹ "if they cannot agree, 'Oh, we will meet on Saturday'. 'Oh, but,' says one of them, 'I am to go out of town.'" Newcastle's own incompetence stood abundantly revealed. "Defend the place?" he would cry with fussy ardour. "Of course we will—but tell me, pray, where may it be?" He was hurrying England along the sure path to ruin. It was like a child, said the same outspoken critic, driving a go-cart along a precipice edge. But at length even Newcastle's own eyes were opened, and before it was too late he had handed over the reins to one in whose keeping they were safe, to one who could drive with all the fury of a Jehu, yet remain complete master of the car.

William Pitt, better known by the title he took later as the Earl of Chatham, was a man of forty-eight when the crisis of 1756 summoned him to power. He had begun life as a soldier, taking his commission in the Dragoon Guards, or "Blues," as they were called. His taste, however, ran towards politics, and, obtaining from a rich relative his

¹ William Pitt himself.

nomination to the rotten borough of Old Sarum, he had entered the House of Commons in 1735. Though a Whig, he was from the first a bitter enemy of Walpole, and had made something of a splash in Parliament by his vehement attacks upon the tottering giant. After Walpole's fall he had taken minor office under the Pelham administration, being appointed Paymaster of the Forces, but not gaining thereby admission to the councils of the inner Cabinet. Yet he was a marked man by this time and in more ways than one. Many disliked and feared him as a dangerous upstart. The King could not abide him; and his restless genius disturbed the comfortable slumbers of the elder Whigs. For, though he had adapted his policy to suit the Pelhams and abandoned the violent attitude of early youth, he refused to sell his soul to any man. In an age when bribery was almost universal, Pitt kept his hands entirely clean. Obligations, whether for patronage or money, were sure in the long run to hamper his career; and, since he meant to rise and knew that he must rise, he preferred to rely upon his natural gifts alone. Of these there never could have been the smallest doubt. He was a born debater, going to the centre of the matter with unerring instinct. His rhetoric was superb. Humorous, tragic, and satirical by turns, he could set the House rocking with convulsive laughter, cow it into abject and terror-struck submission, wither all opponents with his lofty scorn. No actor ever knew better how to play upon the feelings of an audience, and Pitt used his voice and gesture with an incomparable skill which would have made a fortune on the stage. At times, it must be allowed, he was apt to be too theatrical. From early youth he had been a constant martyr to the gout; yet even this infirmity was turned to use. He would come down to the House his feet swathed in bandages, a crutch supporting him, his arm suspended in a sling. Thus arrayed he would harrow his hearers with the pathetic appeal of a sick and dying man. Yet, as he warmed to his work and the flood of his own eloquence began to carry him away, out would come the crippled arm

from its sling, the bandaged foot would stamp in passion on the floor, and the crutch, no longer needed, would be whirled above his head. Pitt was a man of many faults and many affectations. But at least he knew his strength, knew also England's need of it, and, so long as an ounce of vigour remained in his frail body, spent it most gladly in the nation's cause. And now at the crisis of 1756, when all around him were helplessly wringing their hands over our failure at Minorca, he saw that his chance had come. "I am sure," he said, "that I can save this country, and that nobody else can." In November, 1756, Pitt became at last "First Minister of State".

The course of Pitt's first ministry, during which he served under the nominal leadership of the Duke of Devonshire, was anything but smooth. The King, as we have said, disliked him, and within six months he and the Duke were forced to give up office. But the eclipse did not last long. The country could not get on without Pitt's genius, and a few weeks later he came back as joint head of a Coalition Government. Newcastle, his old chief, was First Lord of the Treasury; Fox, his chief rival, was Paymaster of the Forces. But it was a coalition only in name. Pitt ruled as a dictator. It was just as well. Nothing but decisive action conceived and directed by a single master brain could have restored our shaken fortunes. Picture the situation. On the continent Frederic of Prussia was our sole ally, and the Powers were now banded together to destroy him. France, which had not forgotten the humiliation she had suffered in the Marlborough wars, was thirsting for revenge. She saw herself already mistress over Europe. She counted upon making India and North America her own. Perhaps she even hoped to wrest from us our hold over the seas. Pitt, however, grasped the situation, saw its vast dangers, gauged its possibilities. His powerful intellect thought (as somebody has said) in continents, and, while keeping a close grip on every detail of our operations, he laid his plans broadly and on a gigantic scale. A mere passive defence—to checkmate French aggression and no more—did not suit

him. He was for carrying war into the enemy's camp, for conquering Canada as well as holding our own colonies, for ousting the French from India as well as for recovering Calcutta. In a word, he was the first British minister to grasp clearly the bold idea of an Empire overseas. His ambition was not merely to stop France from becoming mistress of the world, but to make Britain so. Yet he did not empty or dissipate his energy on wild colonial schemes. He saw that Europe remained the central theatre of action, and that only by defeating France at home could he conquer her, permanently abroad. "We shall win Canada," he said, "on the banks of the Elbe." Not that he had any natural weakness or affection for Hanover or Prussia. In the old days of Carteret he had been a bitter opponent of such foreign entanglements. But now the situation was entirely changed; and not even Carteret himself could have been stronger on the necessity of supporting our foreign friends. Pitt saw that before the combined attack of France and Austria Frederic must inevitably succumb without strong British aid. So aid went out to Frederic—troops so far as we could spare them, money which we could spare with infinitely greater ease. Nor must it ever be forgotten that victory is forged by silver bullets, and that it was the staying power of the long English purse which enabled us to fight through this series of great wars to ultimate success. Taxes paid by our rich landowners and merchants continued to finance our ally's armies as well as to support our own, when France and Austria were drained to the last penny and forced to capitulate from sheer exhaustion. But Pitt, above all, perceived the capital importance of our sea power. He used it to keep France preoccupied and nervous by threatening attacks upon her coast. He used it to convoy troops to our colonials, while France was almost powerless to help hers; and, though the French fleet fought doggedly and well, he never once gave it the opportunity to cancel this great advantage. The Navy in his keeping remained the sure basis of our victory.

The Seven Years' War (so called because it lasted from 1756 to 1763) was waged in three separate—widely separate—areas, in North America, in India, and in Europe itself. Each of these three it will be advisable to treat apart. In each it should be noted that fortune had gone against us previous to Pitt's entry upon power, that under his influence and direction the aspect of the war was almost immediately changed, and that by the time his work had been accomplished we had gained decisively the upper hand in all the three. We will begin with North America.

II. THE WAR IN NORTH AMERICA.

Before we can understand the campaigns by which Canada was now to be brought under the British flag, it will first be necessary to cast our eyes back over the situation and events of the preceding years. Tension between the French and English settlers had for some while been growing greater, and, although the French colonial population was vastly inferior in numbers—counting perhaps 60,000 souls against two million British—yet they had at least made up for this initial disadvantage by their more aggressive and far-sighted tactics. While they were busy training every man that they could muster and stiffening their colonial levies by regiments and officers sent out from France, their Anglo-Saxon rivals were giving no serious trouble or attention to measures of defence. The Southern Planters of Maryland or Virginia refused to raise a finger on behalf of the remote northern frontier. The Quakers of Pennsylvania made it a point of conscience to abstain from warfare altogether. Even the Puritan settlers of the northern group, though themselves directly menaced by a near and watchful enemy, were ill-organised and disunited. An undisciplined militia, whose very officers were elected by the common rank and file, was all that they could put into the field against the trained regiments of France; and the wonder is not that Canada was eventually conquered, but that our own possessions had not long before been lost.

The territory now held by our colonials formed, as has been said above, a long narrow strip of sea-board bounded on the west by the Alleghany mountains and extending from Georgia in the south to Acadia or Nova Scotia¹ in the extreme north. This narrow strip was well-nigh encircled and contained by a vast and growing girdle of French territory, which began from Cape Breton Island off the coast of Nova Scotia, followed south-west along the shores of the St. Lawrence, and then plunged south through the as yet uncolonised basin of the Ohio down to the main stream and outlet of the Mississippi. During the War of the Austrian Succession one horn of the semi-circle—Cape Breton Island—had fallen for the moment into British hands, and its fortress of Louisburg, which commanded the approach to the St. Lawrence River, had been captured. The French, however, had bargained eagerly for its recovery; and to the intense annoyance of its British captors Louisburg had been surrendered in exchange for Madras at the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Having thus secured their position on its northern flank, the French began to complete the work of encirclement towards the south. A line of forts or block-houses (to which reference has already been made above) was projected all along the western rear of the British colonies. Several were built, and in 1754 one such fort was established on the upper reaches of the Ohio and named after its founder Fort Duquesne. Fort Duquesne was practically due west of Philadelphia, and, when the English saw the enemy's embrace thus closing round them, they suddenly became alive to the gravity of their position. Even the Newcastle Cabinet woke up, rubbed its eyes, and sent out two regiments under an elderly, brave, but incompetent officer named Braddock. As soon as he arrived, a council of war was held; and, though in Europe at least England and France were outwardly at peace, it was decided that Braddock and his regulars, together with a small colonial reinforcement, should march into the interior,

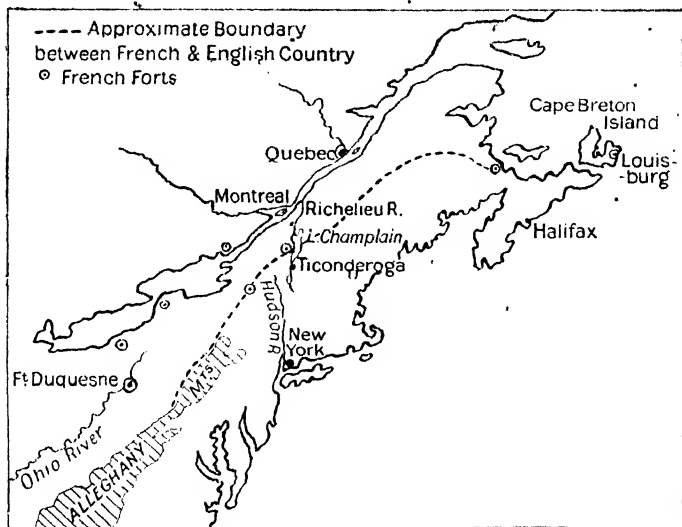
. ¹ Nova Scotia became ours by the Treaty of Utrecht.

cross the Alleghanies, and capture Fort Duquesne. On 7th June, 1755, the memorable trek began. It was scorching summer. Roads were non-existent. Two considerable ranges had to be surmounted. The forest scrub was dense and swarmed with hostile Indians. Under such conditions five or six miles a day was as much as a column, heavily encumbered with wagons, ammunition carts, and siege artillery, was able to accomplish. Nevertheless, by the 7th of July Braddock had arrived in the neighbourhood of Fort Duquesne. With rising spirits the British regulars pushed on through the bush, moving like an army on parade, in close formation, with a drum and fife band playing at their head, their smart red uniforms, short pig-tails, and pipe-clayed trappings presenting a novel and incongruous spectacle in those virgin forest glades. As they advanced, the undergrowth grew denser. Their pace slowed down. Suddenly all ears were startled by the wild war-whoop of Red Indian warriors. For a moment the blue uniforms of French regulars were seen flitting about among the natives they had armed and trained. Then volley after volley, aimed by an invisible foe, played on the close ranks of the British column. The red-coats stood the ordeal manfully, but their officers were a special target for the enemy's sharp-shooters; no attempt was made to extend the men in open order; and after two hours of simple butchery the column broke into a wild stampede. Braddock, mortally wounded, was carried back on a litter; and before he was able to rally the survivors, he had died. Barely half the members of that tragic expedition got home to tell the tale. Among them was a young officer, whose intrepid conduct on that fatal day proved but an earnest of still more brilliant exploits yet to come—George Washington.

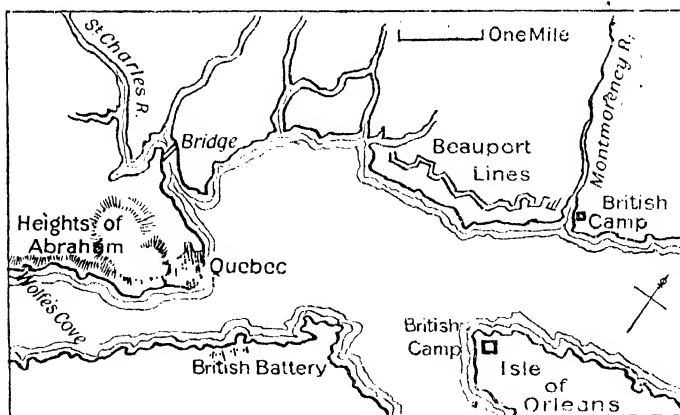
Braddock's disaster sent a thrill of shame and horror through the colonies and England. Fresh troops and volunteers were raised among the settlers. Fresh raids were undertaken against the French blockhouse system. But next to nothing was achieved. There was no directing brain. So the months passed. In '56 came the formal

declaration of war between the parent countries. But Newcastle was still at the helm and still nothing was done. Then enter Pitt—and, although at so great a distance much precious time was necessarily wasted before his influence was duly felt, our colonial policy was from that moment onwards utterly transformed. Pitt's habit, as has been said previously, was to think in continents. He saw that to retain our footing in America we must conquer Canada first; and to conquer Canada became his firm intent. Two regiments of Highlanders were at once enrolled. Eight thousand regulars were voted for service overseas; and by midsummer of '57 the best part of this contingent had arrived in Halifax. Nor did Pitt omit from his consideration the improvement (sorely needed) of the high command. The army, like every other part of governmental service, had suffered from the prevalent corruption. Promotion was obtained by influence or wire-pulling rather than by honest merit or hard work. Pitt, who had his finger upon every detail, was determined to bring true genius to the fore. He over-rode all rules of seniority; and, with a marvellous eye for detecting youthful promise, he chose out officers whom he could trust—we shall hear presently of more than one. By the ardour of his enthusiasm he breathed a new spirit into our campaigns. His influence was magnetic. He made others believe both in him and in themselves; and, though at times his interference must have hampered and deranged the smooth conduct of operations, it was impossible, men said, to leave Pitt's presence without feeling oneself thenceforth a braver man.

The year 1757 passed uneventfully. Summer was far advanced when the reinforcements came, and winter in these northern latitudes was no campaigning season. In '58, however, the invasion of Canada was begun in sober earnest. To reach it two main routes were then available. One route ran overland up the valley of the Hudson River, past Lake Champlain, and over the River Richelieu, till it debouched in the St. Lawrence between Quebec and Montreal. The other route was by sea, past Nova Scotia and



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE CAMPAIGNS FROM 1755-1759.



PLAN TO ILLUSTRATE WOLFE'S ATTACK ON QUEBEC.

Cape Breton Island and across the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the river mouth. In the campaign of '58 an approach was made by each of these two routes. One expedition struck overland along the Hudson valley to capture a French fort which blocked the route near a spot called Ticonderoga. Abercromby, its commander, was a feeble general; and, though, Pitt had sent Lord Howe, a smart young officer, along with him, Lord Howe was unhappily killed upon the march. Thus left without an adviser, Abercromby proceeded like a fool. As he approached the fort, he left his artillery behind him; and, instead of being content to reduce the place by siege (which he could easily have done), he endeavoured to carry it by storm. The result was a foregone conclusion. The British regiments were mown down wholesale at every hopeless charge; and by evening the order was given to retire. This was a sad set-back; but happily it was the last. And meanwhile the other expedition had compensated for it by a great success. Sir Jeffrey Amherst, who was one of "Pitt's young men," and James Wolfe, who was another, had undertaken to reduce the fortress of Louisburg, the old bone of contention in the previous war and now considerably strengthened. Avoiding Abercromby's error at Ticonderoga, they sat down with patience to a five weeks' siege, battered the place to bits with siege artillery, and finally without much serious fighting compelled it to surrender. Their way lay open now to the St. Lawrence and Quebec. But the news of Abercromby's failure kept them back, and the invasion of Canada was postponed till '59.

Quebec, which was to be the objective of the next year's expedition, is by nature far less accessible than Louisburg. It lies on the tip of a projecting spur on the northern shore of the great estuary, which here varies from one to over three miles wide. The town is well protected from approach along the bank and to the west by the Heights of Abraham beetling above the river, to the east by the side-stream known as the St. Charles. Beyond the St. Charles stretched the long Beauport ridge shelving gently to the

shore. This vulnerable point the French had entrenched deeply, and here the main body of their troops were now encamped. Montcalm, their general, who had arrived in '56, was a capable commander. He had made his dispositions with the utmost skill, and some recent reinforcements which got past the British fleet under cover of a fog had raised the total of his command—militia-men included—to some 16,000 men. Québec was beyond doubt a difficult nut to crack; and only a man of extraordinary daring and imagination could ever have had the spirit even to attempt it. Pitt, however, had set his heart on the attempt and had chosen his man. During the previous winter he had seen the young James Wolfe, then home in London, and offered him the job. Wolfe was a born soldier. As a high-spirited lad of sixteen he had fought among the infantry at Dettingen; and even in an age so adverse to true merit nothing could stop his rise. Though he was weak in health, his reckless enthusiasm allowed no rest to his frail body. A skilful fisherman, a first-class shot, and an indefatigable dancer, Wolfe yet found time for study and wide reading. He knew the campaigns of all the Greek and Roman generals, and (what is more) he could turn such knowledge to account. Struck by the need for open order fighting, he had trained a body of light infantry on lines suggested by a hint in Xenophon; and his wilful disregard for the hide-bound traditions of the British Army shocked and bewildered his superior officers. Though they called him a madman for his pains, the shock was sorely needed. "Mad, is he?" the King himself is reported to have said. "Then I hope he'll bite some of my generals." To such a man, as well may be imagined, Pitt's proposal appeared a heaven-sent chance; and at the beginning of next June Wolfe was setting out from Louisburg with an army half the size of Montcalm's to attack Quebec. At the same time another expedition under Amherst, his old comrade, was taking the overland route to Canada via Lake Champlain, intending to aim a simultaneous blow at Montreal. The co-operation of these two separate armies

was destined, however, to miscarry. Amherst was held up all summer by the French block-house system; and Wolfe was left to tackle Canada alone.

Towards the end of June, Wolfe's fleet of men-of-war and transports arrived at their destination. The first step was to occupy a base; and for this purpose the Island of Orleans, which lies in mid-river some five miles below the city, was at once selected. An attempt on the enemy's part to dislodge the fleet by fire ships was happily frustrated; and the British tars were equal to the occasion, putting out pluckily in boats to tow the burning hulks ashore and shouting—so the story goes—in boisterous merriment “Darnme, Jack, didst ever take Hell in tow before?” His base on the Island of Orleans being thus secured, Wolfe lost no time in occupying two further strategic points, one on either bank of the river. On the south bank and directly opposite the city he posted his siege artillery; and very soon the fire of the British guns had reduced the houses of Quebec to ruins. A second gun position had also been taken up on the northern bank, just east of the Beauport lines and divided from them by a torrent and a wooded gorge. From this point of vantage a bombardment of the French lines was steadily maintained. So July passed. Quebec itself was shattered. A skirmish or two had taken place across the wooded gorge. But Montcalm remained immovable. It paid him well to play a waiting game. Two months more and winter would be at hand—and then good-bye to Monsieur Wolfe and all his aspirations.

How short his time was Wolfe, too, knew well enough, and he resolved upon an infinitely daring stroke—an assault on the Beauport lines. Flat-bottomed boats were made ready. These were to run ashore with troops hard by the wooded gorge, and simultaneously another party was to cross the torrent which flowed down it. Daring as the plan was, its first stages went off smoothly. The boats ran in; the soldiers disembarked; and a part of the Beauport lines was already breached, when a strange and unaccountable mishap marred all. Stung by some sudden

frenzy, the soldiers rushed ahead, without orders, without officers, without tactical formation, and delivered a wild charge. The slope was without cover. It was swept with a hail of bullets. And the best that Wolfe could do when all was over was to get his men off again as rapidly as they had come.

Another period of inaction followed. Eating out his heart at this bitter disappointment and stricken down by an attack of devastating fever, Wolfe watched the precious days of August slipping by. At the beginning of September he rose, still weak from sickness, to plan the last attack, which cost him his life and took Quebec. Having failed to gain a footing on the Beauport flank, he resolved to attempt the city from the westward and to scale the precipitous Heights of Abraham. To this end he now embarked over half his remaining forces in his ships and sent them upstream several miles above Quebec, where they were kept plying up and down for four days and nights together. Although a small French force was at once sent to watch their movements, it hardly so much as entered Montcalm's head that the British would attempt a landing on the cliff. There was but one path accessible to a scaling party; and this, so Montcalm thought, was adequately held by a French picket. No, if the attack came anywhere, it would come on the St. Charles River and the Beauport Ridge. This illusion kept Montcalm's main army at its previous station; and to this illusion Wolfe lent all the colour that he could. The British guns which faced Quebec began a fresh bombardment eclipsing all that they had done before. Everything was arranged to give Montcalm the impression that the excursion up the river was an idle feint and that the attack was being planned against his main defences.

Meanwhile the British ships plied on the river with their precious freight and Wolfe waited for the arrival of a favourable night. On 12th September it came. The order was given. The troops on board the ships dropped silently into their boats and floated down-stream to the cliff-side. The night was dark; the river was broad.

They passed almost unnoticed—but not quite. Once a challenge rang out from the shore. A Scottish officer replied in perfect French; and the sentry, knowing that French provision-boats made midnight journeys, accepted the explanation. They came to the path, slipped quietly from their boats, swarmed up the steep ascent, and, appearing suddenly out of the darkness in the midst of the French picket, drove them headlong from their post. Meanwhile, as fast as other boats arrived, their men passed up on to the summit, and when morning broke Wolfe had a force over 4000 strong marshalled on the heights above the town. The news fell like a thunderclap on Montcalm, who was still expecting an attempt against the Beauport lines. He acted promptly, gathering a force almost equal to the British, hurrying them over the St. Charles and marching them desperately against the ridge. There Wolfe awaited them. His men had orders to load with double bullets and to withhold their fire till the enemy were close. The volley, which was delivered at less than fifty paces, tore the French line to ribands. After a second discharge the British went home with the bayonet and the day was won. In the moment of victory, however, Wolfe himself was hit through the lung, and sank a dying man. As he was carried towards the rear, they told him the enemy were running. "God be praised," he said, "I now die in peace," and fell back in a last swoon. But his task was achieved. Quebec was taken. Amherst, who had been checked that year on Lake Champlain, came through next summer and took Montreal. Canada thenceforward became ours. The French inhabitants were generously treated and soon settled down as loyal and contented subjects of the British crown. Their descendants, who are still numerous, remain so to this day.

III. THE WAR IN INDIA

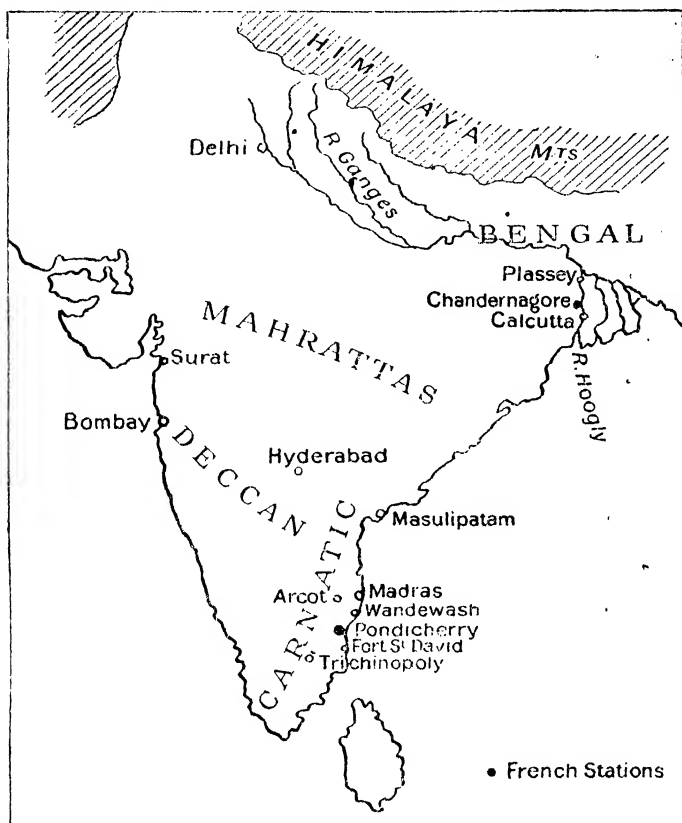
With India, as with North America, we must begin the story by casting back over the eight years' interval which

divided the 'Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle from the outbreak of the Seven Years' War. In India the peace had itself done something to restore our fortunes. Madras, which we had lost to the French, was given back to us. The Company resumed the broken threads of its prosperous enterprise. The natives brought in their wares, ships plied their homeward way, trade thrived, and there was little hint of that tremendous destiny, which was soon to deliver over this swarming country of brown peoples into the keeping of a handful of whites. The conquest of Hindustan was not, like that of Canada, planned by a master mind or even dreamt of. It was no long campaigns of march and counter-march, no scientific generalship, nor brilliant scheme of far-flung strategy which served to make India ours, but simply the cool courage of a single British officer and the steady discipline of a few score British soldiers, which were to sweep the hordes of an Oriental despot like chaff before the wind. Nevertheless there was another and more insidious enemy for us to fear than the hollow impotence of the decaying Mogul Viceroys. India herself possessed no strength or power of resistance; but already the cunning brain of a French diplomatist was planning to turn her very weakness to the account of his country's cause. Since his arrival as Governor of Pondicherry in 1741, Dupleix had slowly been extending his subtle influence over the south of India. He had wormed himself into the confidence of various native princes, and, in particular, he had established a strong hold over the ruler of the Deccan who reigned in Hyderabad. In 1748, the year of the Aix Treaty, this potentate had died. Disputes had arisen concerning his successor, and there followed, as was usual, civil war. The subordinate district of the Carnatic Coast (where lay Pondicherry and Madras) was also soon involved. Two candidates had claimed its throne, and Dupleix, in pursuance of his accustomed policy, had supported one of these. The English, not to be outdone, had backed the other. Unhappily for us, however, we had put our money on the losing horse. Our nominee was overwhelmed and slain,

and his son, Mahomed Ali, was hunted into Trichinopoly and there besieged. His case very soon grew desperate, and nothing seemed more certain than that Trichinopoly would fall, that Dupleix' nominee would duly be enthroned, and that the whole position of the English company on the Carnatic coast would thus be set at the mercy of a hostile prince. Then a miracle happened.

The miracle was the work of a young Company's clerk, named Robert Clive. Shipped out by his relatives to India as a good-for-nothing boy, Clive had passed a miserable apprenticeship at the uncongenial desk. Twice he had attempted suicide, but the pistol refused on each occasion to go off. He had challenged a notorious bully to a duel for cheating over cards; but the boy's cool pluck had won his opponent's admiration, and once again he had survived. Clive was now, in 1751, just twenty-five years old, and, as good luck would have it, he had been recently appointed a captain in the Company's small troop. When it seemed as though nothing could save Trichinopoly or avert the failure of the native prince whom the Company had backed, Clive suddenly came forward with a bold proposal which was accepted by his chiefs. With half-a-dozen other officers, two hundred English and three hundred Sepoy soldiers, Clive undertook to march, not against the besiegers of Trichinopoly itself, but against the town of Arcot, the seat and capital of the Carnatic throne. He entered it unopposed, and the impudent diversion produced the precise effect he had intended. The French and their allies were thoroughly alarmed. Troops were detached from the siege of Trichinopoly and sent back helter-skelter to recover Arcot. There were soon ten thousand native troops buzzing around the walls, within which sat Clive with a garrison now diminished to 320 men. The story of that famous siege is too long to be told here. Fifty days of painful vigilance and slow starvation had reduced the tiny garrison to the borders of despair, when suddenly a new hope dawned. A band of Mahratta warriors—that terrible hill-race which was now the scourge of India—was rumoured

to be marching to their aid; good news indeed, but its effect was double-edged, for it quickened the pace of the besiegers and a final assault on a grand scale was planned forthwith.



INDIA DURING THE SEVEN YEARS WAR.

Rafts were made ready to cross the waters of the moat; elephants, armed with steel plates upon their fore-heads, were sent as "living battering-rams" against the gates; and for a whole hour hordes of innumerable natives, doped with

drugs and inspired with the courage of fanatics, swarmed up against the wall. It was a fierce ordeal; but the English garrison held grimly on. Their fire never faltered. The ardour of the natives quickly cooled. The attack died down almost as suddenly as it had begun, and when the next morning broke the enemy had vanished. Clive was the hero of the hour, and he made good use of his success. French forts were taken. Many of Dupleix' sepoy's deserted to our side. Before long Trichinopoly itself had been relieved, and Mahomed Ali, the English nominee, reigned in the Carnatic.

Clive himself came home for a while to England in enfeebled health; but on his return to India he was appointed Governor of Fort St. David. The scene of his second exploit, however, lay no longer in the neighbourhood of Madras, but by the shores of the River Ganges and in the province of Bengal. There on the Hoogly river the English Company possessed a station known as Fort St. William, hard by the populous native village of Calcutta. The Mogul's Viceroy who ruled over Bengal as an independent prince, was a native of a peculiarly brutal type, by name Surajah Dowlah. He hated the English, resented their presence at Calcutta, and regarded with jealous eyes the possibilities of plunder which their station seemed to offer. He awaited only a suitable occasion to attack it. About the same time as men in England were indignantly discussing the failure of Byng's mission to Minorca, Surajah Dowlah perceived the opportunity he sought. The English residents of Fort St. William themselves supplied him with a pretext. In anticipation of war against the French (whose neighbouring settlement at Chandernagore was a constant menace to their station), they had begun to strengthen and improve the defences of their fort. Surajah Dowlah objected, and, when no notice was taken of his protest, he marched down upon the place and took it, making the residents his prisoners. What followed is well known, and it must always rank among the blackest crimes even in Eastern history. The European prisoners, 146 in

number, were placed in a narrow cell, twenty feet square, low-roofed, and ventilated only by two tiny holes. Careless of their fate, Surajah Dowlah retired to rest. Before an hour had passed on that hot summer night, the air in the small cell was quite exhausted. The wretched inmates, gasping for breath and maddened with intolerable thirst, trampled each other down in their frantic efforts to gain a station at the windows. The guards outside made merry at their torture, tantalised them by sprinkling drops of water which could only serve to intensify their thirst, and, threats, bribes, or supplications notwithstanding, refused point-blank to disturb the slumbers of their brutal master. In the morning there were three-and-twenty persons left alive; the rest were dead.

When news of this horror reached Madras, a stern cry went up for vengeance, and within forty-eight hours it was decided to send Clive with such troops as were available to punish the author of the crime. By the end of the following December 900 English and nearly twice as many Sepoys were landed in the north to do battle with a prince who could count more subjects, as Macaulay says, than the Queen-Empress or the King of France himself. Clive retook Calcutta without trouble, but before he could advance into the interior he received orders—to his own intense disgust—to treat for terms. Chicanery and fraud are the heart and soul of eastern diplomacy, and Surajah Dowlah's tactics were no exception to this rule. But during the negotiations opportunity arose of paying him back in his own coin. The prince's chief commander, Mir Jaffar by name, expressed a secret readiness to throw his master over. Clive, like most Englishmen of the time, had one code of honour among white men, another among black, and, while he lulled Surajah's mind with all appearances of friendship, he embraced Mir Jaffar's proposal to bring his army over to the English side. The danger of a hitch induced him to still sharper practice. A certain native go-between discovered what schemes were brewing and threatened ostentatiously to blab. Clive bought his silence by a forged

promise of reward which it was never intended to fulfil. Then, when the time was ripe, the small English army moved out of Calcutta and proceeded northward against the foe. At Plassey, somewhat south of the junction between the Ganges and the Hoogly, the native army was encountered over fifty thousand strong. Clive's force was hardly a twentieth of their number, and, when the battle was joined, Mir Jaffar was still hesitating to show his hand. But the English did not flinch. Their well-directed musketry and the fire of their field-pieces checked, held, and eventually turned the onslaught of the natives. Surajah, easily persuaded that the day was lost, gave orders for retreat, and himself fled from the field on a swift camel. Mir Jaffar, seeing the issue of the fight no longer doubtful, now tactfully deserted to our side. He at least rendered us the service of laying his late master by the heels and consigning him to a fate most richly merited. As a reward for his by no means disinterested treachery, he was installed in Surajah's place as ruler of Bengal, paying henceforth a vassal's homage and an annual tribute to the English Company.

Arcof had won us a preponderating influence in the Carnatic. Plassey had placed a creature of ours on the throne of Bengal. But the Deccan—in which was comprised almost the whole vast peninsula of southern India—remained as yet untouched. There at least French influence still reigned supreme; and the Count de Lally, successor to Dupleix, was already laying plans for our undoing. Madras was threatened; but Clive, instead of returning from Bengal to meet this danger, decided against orders on a flank attack. A small contingent was sent southward from Calcutta and worked along the coast to Masulipatam, where a French garrison was stationed. It was a telling stroke. The capture of Masulipatam sounded the death-knell to all the French ambitions. Their prestige was shattered. The ruler of the Deccan hastened to throw them over, and became thenceforth the English Company's ally. But Clive's health was once again precarious, and he was forced

to sail for England. To complete the work which he had so well begun and to drive the French completely out of India remained for another hand than his. It was in the latter end of 1759 that Sir Eyre Coote, now the Company's commander, attacked and captured the French fort at Wandewash, south of Madras. Count Lally, while attempting to retrieve it, was signally defeated; and Pondicherry itself was soon under close siege. With its fall the French power passed away for ever; events in Europe forbade a renewal of the struggle, and henceforth India lay before us, an undisputed field.

In all these doings Pitt played, it must be confessed, no active part. By the time that Plassey was fought, he, himself was barely seated firmly in position. The most that he could do was to sing Clive's praises in the House of Commons and reward "that heaven-born general" at his home-coming with signal marks of admiration and esteem. Reinforcements he could indeed send out and did send; and very useful they were in the final bout with the French. But India was too far distant for a minister in London to keep the direction of the campaign's details under his personal eye. Our Indian victories were won under the rising star of Pitt's good fortune; they were in no sense his work. At most they did but add to the increasing lustre which triumph after triumph won in Europe was now shedding on his name.

IV. THE WAR IN EUROPE

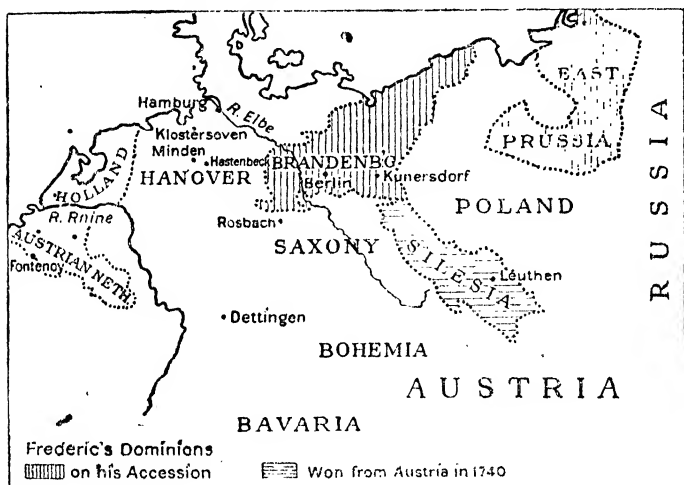
Magnificent as were the campaigns in North America and India, rich in stirring incident and far-reaching in result, they were none the less little more than supplementary "side-shows" to the main centre of the conflict nearer home. Whether France or England was eventually to emerge as permanent mistress of the world, was decided not in American back-woods nor on sun-scorched tropical sands, but on the less romantic plains of Northern Germany and in the familiar waters of the Channel. Whatever were the

deeper issues of the war, we had entered it ostensibly to save Prussia from destruction, and throughout its course the paramount object of our policy was the perservation of this our one and indispensable ally. Frederic's plight, indeed, demanded all the help that we could give. He was encompassed about by a ring of hostile nations—France, Austria, Sweden, Saxony, and Russia—to all appearance an overwhelming combination. It was scarcely to be expected that Prussia, a young power still in her infancy, could meet such odds as these. Her territory—a straggling spread-eagle of divergent provinces, reaching out a narrow eastern wing along the Baltic and possessing in its recent acquisition of Silesia a handsome but extremely vulnerable tail—was as ill adapted for defence as it could be and exposed to attack from half-a-dozen sides at the very least. Yet, in the face of these enormous disadvantages, Frederic put up a splendid fight. His army of seasoned veterans had lost none of the fine discipline and spirit of their Silesian conquest; and they were led with a genius which no one can deny. Frederic was a portent among generals. On Napoleon's own showing he stands well in the front rank. More than one of his victories was a positive masterpiece of strategy; in defeat he could rally a demoralised and scattered army; and despite the most cruel vicissitudes and disappointments he never would cry lost. The perfect readiness and matchless organisation of his army gave him a brilliant start. In '56 he overran the whole of Saxony. In '57 he entered Bohemia and nearly captured Prague. But this success had been bought at too high a price. He began to run short of men. Towards the autumn of that year the tide had turned against him. Berlin itself was plundered, Silesia lost. But Frederic was not to be beaten. By a gigantic effort he recovered his feet, beat the French at Rossbach in November, dashed off to Silesia and beat the Austrians at Leuthen, and thus within thirty days of marching retrieved all that he had lost. His troubles however were not over yet; and in '59 luck deserted him once more. He was threatened on two fronts. An Austrian army

was massing in the south. The Cossacks were sweeping the country to the east. Frederic turned against the Russians, and after a frightful struggle saw his army broken into utter rout at a place called Kunersdorf. His own capture was but narrowly averted; and for the moment Frederic was given over to despair. He ordered the royal family to evacuate Berlin, and in a farewell message declared that he himself would not survive the ruin of his realm. But he still struggled on. His recovery was slow; it was chequered by numerous reverses; and in no small degree he owed it to the staunch support of his allies. Without the assistance afforded him by England recovery would never have been possible at all; and to the English share in the struggle we must now turn.

As in the great European conflict of more recent days, our rôle in the Seven Years' War was equally twofold. We had first and foremost to maintain the mastery of the sea; and on land we had to protect our ally's flank. This second part of our task was rendered the more simple, because, as the map will show, the whole western frontier of Prussia is covered by Hanover. The Anglo-Hanoverian army of King George served therefore a double purpose. While defending Hanover for George himself, it was able also to act sentinel on Frederic's flank, ridding him of all responsibilities and dangers toward the west. In short, the maintenance of Hanover was the indispensable foundation of the alliance's success; and the more shame to us therefore that it was grievously mishandled at the start. The fault lay with the Duke of Cumberland, who went out to Hanover in '57 to take up the command. A bully, a martinet, and incompetent at that, Cumberland loathed Pitt with all his heart and laboured to discredit him with George; and so much weight did his poisonous influence carry in the royal counsels that the great minister was, as we have seen, for a time at least dismissed. The eclipse did not last long; but, before Pitt had barely time to resume the reins of office, Cumberland had committed a disgraceful act which placed our whole cause in jeopardy. Defeated by

the French at Hastenbeck, and driven back northward on the German coast, the Duke had taken on himself to sign an agreement which would in effect have put Hanover out of the war. One half of the Hanoverian army was to be interned; the other half was pledged to observe a strict neutrality. The French accepted the surrender and withdrew their forces. In England, however, the outcry was tremendous. The King declared (with Pitt's most vehement



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE CONTINENTAL CAMPAIGNS OF THE SEVEN YEARS WAR.

support) that in signing the agreement of Klosterseven Cumberland had gone beyond his powers; and with less honour than discretion we repudiated the shameful terms outright. The campaign was now resumed; and Cumberland's place was taken by Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, lent to Hanover from Frederic's Prussian staff. Happily he proved as brilliant a commander as Cumberland was bad, and the complexion of affairs was very soon improved. Nor was Pitt slow in getting into his stride. Money poured out to Hanover and Prussia. "We must have

heaps of millions," Pitt declared; and more than two and a half millions—in those days an immense sum—went out to Frederic alone in the next four years. Two thousand English troops were promised for service with the Hanoverian army; and Pitt was so far better than his word that he sent a full six thousand, at the same time undertaking to defray the cost of the German troops as well. Men of the old school complained of his extravagance. Extravagant perhaps it was; but it was an extravagance that paid. Ferdinand of Brunswick was already performing marvels with the very troops which Cumberland had so woefully mishandled. In '58 he had actually driven the French back west across the Rhine, when the promised English reinforcements reached him. Though presently compelled to retire on the Hanoverian frontier, he maintained a stout defence, an invaluable support to Frederic's flank. In August of '59 he went one better. Having manoeuvred the enemy into accepting battle on unfavourable terms, he trounced them handsomely at Minden. The French suffered total rout; and were only saved from complete annihilation by the stupidity (or cowardice) of the English cavalry commander. In blank disobedience of instructions Lord George Sackville refused to launch his troops upon the broken foe. There was not the smallest excuse for his behaviour. The opportunity was lost, and the French escaped. Yet, coming as it did within a few weeks of Frederic's disastrous rout at Kunersdorf, Minden was doubly welcome. It afforded a gleam of hope at a black hour when our ally's plight had otherwise seemed hopeless. It was the turning-point of the war.

Nor was Minden an isolated triumph; for in that same year we won another great success. We had not all this while been neglecting our natural element, the water; and, if our participation in the land campaigns had been comparatively small, we had borne the whole heavy burden of sea warfare alone. Pitt's use of the navy was on a lordly scale. Fleets were sent out regardless of expense; every craft afloat was pressed into the service; every dock-yard

was kept building to its full capacity. Even so our commitments were so vast and so extensive that ships were kept riding the channel till their very timbers rotted and their hulks were foul. A constant watch was kept on the French naval bases, and scarcely a ship was allowed to get away to Canada or India. Yet Pitt was not to be contented with a mere blockade. He saw that one use of sea-power was to assist our land forces by an offensive strategy. So a succession of daring raids were made on the French coast—on Rochefort in '57; on St. Malo, Cherbourg, and Le Havre in '58. There was little positive result to show for them beyond much damage done to the French shipping; but undoubtedly they served a useful purpose. They kept the enemy on tenterhooks, and detained in France no small portion of the forces which might otherwise have been employed against Hanover or Prussia. The strain, moreover, was slowly telling on the Frenchmen's nerves. Their funds were approaching exhaustion; colonies were slipping from their grasp in distant quarters of the globe; and the sense of baffled effort, increased by the calm and successful tenacity of England, stung them at length to a despairing resolution. They saw (as many others have seen since) that only by a successful invasion of these shores could complete and permanent victory be won. Their plans were accordingly directed to this end. At their great naval base of Rochefort in the Bay of Biscay, as well as at Dunkirk and at Le Havre, there were concentrations of soldiers, transport ships, and flat-bottomed boats. Two main fleets were in readiness, one lying at Brest under Cape Finistère, the other at Toulon, their Mediterranean station; and in August of '59 an attempt was made to effect a junction of the two. The Toulon fleet left port, made through Gibraltar Straits and raced for Brest. But after it came Boscawen, the English admiral told off to watch Toulon. He caught them off Lagos Bay, near Cape St. Vincent, and, risking offence to Portuguese neutrality, closed in and broke them up. The Brest fleet alone remained; but its admiral,

Conflans, was no coward, and he still clung to the project of invasion. His main difficulty was to escape the tireless watch of the English frigates, behind which in constant readiness lay the Plymouth squadron of Lord Hawke. In November, however, a sudden chance occurred. A westerly gale blew Hawke's ships back to harbour, and before they were able to regain their stations Conflans had slipped away southward out of Brest. There was at once a hot pursuit; and when Hawke came up with him off Quiberon Bay, not far from the Loire mouth, the French commander ran in under the shore, where he scarcely dreamt that the pursuit would follow. The rock-bound coast was full of jutting reefs and sunken shoals—to all appearances a death-trap to any fleet which did not know the soundings. It was a tremendous risk; but Lord Hawke took it, and ran straight in amid the plunging breakers. Two of his vessels struck bottom; but the rest by a miracle got through, and it was all up with Conflans then. Five of the enemy were sunk or captured; seven were driven ashore; the rest went scattering in all directions. Quiberon was a hammer-stroke. To all intents and purposes, France no longer had a fleet; all risk of invasion was over. England was henceforth the unchallenged mistress of the sea; and the shame of Minorca had been at length wiped out. Hawke at any rate had not "failed to do his utmost".

So closed the great year of '59 amid the echoes of repeated victory. Triumph had followed triumph in bewildering succession. Plassey was now past history; but it was known that in the spring Masulipatam had been taken, and the French power in India was tottering to its fall. In early August came the news of Minden. Reports of Lagos Bay had followed hard. Even as Hawke's fleet raced out of the Channel after Conflans, ships were entering it which had assisted at the capture of Quebec. And now the fickle London mob, who had burned Lord Hawke in effigy for letting the French navy out of Brest, were lighting bonfires in his honour for destroying it. It was thus

barely three years since Pitt had set out to "organise" world victory from Westminster. He had organised to some purpose.

V

The first half of the year '60 brought no great change in the European situation. Thanks to Minden and still further English aid, Frederic's plight, though disastrous, was not desperate. He was presently to be able to reconcile the Russians and so reduce the number of his foes; and, meanwhile, he was prepared to hang on grimly. Given time, it was certain that sooner or later the enemy must crack. France knew that she was beaten. She had lost Canada; she had lost India; she had lost the sea; and we had only to wait until she was ready to acknowledge her defeat. So matters stood on 24th October in the autumn of that year. On 25th October George II died suddenly at Kensington from a rupture of the heart; and from that moment all was changed. The man who had ruled England for three-and-thirty years without very much affecting her for good or ill was now succeeded by a grandson,¹ who, for worse rather than for better, intended to affect her very much indeed. Unlike the two first Hanoverian kings, George III was born and bred an Englishman; and in many ways his character was peculiarly English. He was essentially a gentleman, always took off his hat to acknowledge a loyal greeting, and always thanked the band for playing at his court. A strict Protestant, he firmly insisted on holding family prayers, and brought up his children on such narrow Puritanical lines that most of them rebelled against the discipline and went sadly to the dogs. His tastes were strongly for an out-door life. He loved farming and kept pigs; he took a long ride every day in Windsor Park; and, though he could be most

¹ George III's father, Frederick, Prince of Wales, had died in 1751. Like his son after him, he had shown himself during his lifetime a vigorous opponent of the Whig régime.

punctilious upon state occasions, his private life was studiously simple. He got up at six in the morning, dined for choice on roast mutton and milk pudding, and kept no carpet on his bedroom floor. All this in its way was admirable enough: it was a pleasing novelty to have a king who declared he "gloried in the name of Briton". The trouble only began when it was found that he expected other Britons equally to glory in him. "George, be *king*," was the motto which a devoted mother had for ever dinned into his ears; and George meant to be. Let us not, however, be mistaken. It was no Stuart despotism with which England was now threatened. George III was not fool enough or bold enough for that. His idea was rather to work *through* the constitution than against it, not to make Parliament his enemy, but to nurse it, wheedle it, master it, and so use it as his tool. In other words, George attempted what no other monarch has attempted since, to engage in party politics, to form in Parliament a caucus of his followers and manage the country's business as his own chief minister. Of necessity he went warily to work. The Whigs were naturally his most formidable opponents, and they were not to be ousted out of hand. The King, however, was in a strong position. If Whigs could reward their creatures with promotion, so could he. If Whigs could collect adherents by the tactful use of patronage, he had greater opportunities of patronage than they. If Whigs could bribe, George, to his shame, was ready to bribe too. By these now familiar, but no less disgraceful methods, many servile and venal politicians were won over to his side. A party sprang up in Parliament which was known as the "King's Friends"; royal favourites were promoted to posts for which they were notoriously unfitted; and one by one the leading statesmen of the previous reign were shown the door. The first to go—as may easily be guessed—was Pitt; and that is why the European situation was so radically changed.

George III did not love Pitt, and he loved his policy still less. Like the old Tory negotiators of the Treaty of

Utrecht, he was by no means anxious to crush France. His one idea was to keep England free from continental complications and play old Walpole's game in his own way. In the opening speech of his reign he plainly asserted his intention to withdraw from "this bloody and expensive war". Pitt had the words altered for publication to "this expensive but just and necessary war"; but the young King's temper was not thereby improved, and he retorted upon Pitt by giving him as fellow Secretary of State a creature of his own, the Earl of Bute. Lord Bute made no pretence to be a statesman. He had spent an idle life of graceful leisure, dabbling at times in literature and art. He was "a tolerable actor in private theatricals," and, as Prince Frederic one day told him to his face, he would have made an excellent ambassador at some small proud German court "where there was nothing to do". Between such a man and Pitt there could be no lasting unison; and, when the breach came, it was decisive. In the course of the year, Pitt had got information that Spain was intending to join in the war upon the side of France. So far from shrinking from this challenge, Pitt rather welcomed it. Intoxicated by the glory of his recent triumphs, he was prepared to go straight ahead; and taking the bull by the horns he proposed to declare war on Spain, to trap her treasure fleet, and then sweep all her American possessions into the English lap. It was an audacious conception, typical of the man; but he had reckoned without his colleague in the ministry. Under the pernicious influence of Bute, the rest of the Cabinet refused to back him. Three times the sittings of the Council were adjourned; at each renewal of the argument Pitt stuck manfully to his colours; and finally, having failed to convert the Cabinet to his opinion, he resigned. War with the Spanish followed all the same; and they suffered severely for their rash interference. Havana, capital of Cuba, Spain's great West Indian island, was besieged and captured, together with a French island to the east, Martinique. In the Far East meanwhile an

expedition sailed from Madras and took Manilla, the great Spanish harbour in the Philippines. For all this no credit could be claimed by Bute, who was now Prime Minister in Pitt's place. He was using his best efforts to undo all Pitt's work, and openly manœuvring for a peace at any price. Within the year he withdrew the annual subsidy which had hitherto gone out to Frederic. He approached both France and Spain with easy terms, and seemed willing to do anything to end the war. It was a strange spectacle, the victorious country entreating the conquered to be allowed to stop; yet that was what Bute's attitude implied. Nevertheless, the Peace which was signed in Paris in 1763 might easily have been worse. We got the whole of Canada and the best part of Louisiana, which left us free to expand westwards at our will. We recovered Minorca, never recaptured since it was lost by Byng seven years before. Over the West Indies and other outlying colonies there was a three-fold deal. England was to have Tobago and a few other lesser islands, and to receive the adjacent peninsula of Florida from Spain. Spain on her part got back Havana and Manilla. France was to recover Martinique and, provided she kept no garrisons therein, her trade stations out in India. As for Frederic of Prussia, he was left out in the cold—a desertion which he never forgave England. But, Russia having swung round to his side, he was able nevertheless to make his peace with Austria on not unsatisfactory terms. He kept Silesia, so long and bloodily disputed. He established Prussia's position as a first-class power, and not long afterwards he added to its territory a considerable slice of Poland. Frederic, in short, had sowed the seeds which Bismarck was to water, and from which grew the recent war of 1914.

The Treaty of Paris was not popular in England. Bute scarcely dared to show his face in London; when he did so, he pulled up his coat collar round his ears and drew his wig down over his eyes. It is said he even kept a trained bodyguard of boxers to protect him against violence. It was too much for the poor man's nerve, and he very soon

resigned. Pitt, on the other hand, was still the nation's hero. At the Lord Mayor's Banquet which followed his retirement there was an extraordinary scene. The young King was received in silence, Bute with jeers, but Pitt with a thunder of applause which shook the very timbers of the Guildhall roof. He was given a pension of £3000, and on the eve of his second and less successful ministry in '66 was made a peer under the title of Earl of Chatham.

CHAPTER IX

THE LOSS OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES

I

LIKE many other monarchs of German origin, George III was the victim of an incurable self-conceit. His narrow mind was altogether centred on his own petty triumphs and personal ambitions; and so blind was he to broader issues that, even when fate placed great opportunities within his grasp, he utterly failed to recognise the fact. Having blundered into a peace which almost despite himself committed to his keeping a vast empire in two continents, he followed this up by blundering into a war which lost him half of it; and upwards of two millions of good honest British subjects were driven to rebellion by his obstinate determination to be at all costs their master and their "King". This great catastrophe in North America was the direct outcome and sequel of George's personal success in gaining control over the Government at home. Here too he meant to be master; and Parliament put up but a sorry fight against him. Politics were too corrupt for the few honest men to tell; and little by little George won the upper hand. But it took time. The Whigs' influence was still strong; their ranks were numerous; they monopolised the machinery of patronage and intrigue. Yet, happily for George, their very numbers and the nature of their methods were a source of weakness too. Intrigue is a double-edged weapon. Thieves always fall out in the end; and the Whig Party, once so strong

and so staunch a combination, was now divided into innumerable factions. Each great Whig magnate had his followers or "friends"; each was intensely jealous of his rivals; and any opportunity was welcomed to stab them in the back. So George was able to play off one against the other, until the time was ripe and the party of his own followers was fully formed. His first choice, after Bute's resignation, was the Whig, George Grenville. But Grenville was a failure. He began by losing his popularity in London through the tactless prosecution of a journalist called Wilkes for an article directed against George. He then lost the confidence of George himself by showing too much inclination to dictate. So he was superseded; and Lord Rockingham, another Whig, was put into his place. Rockingham, however, did not stay for long. His view that Wilkes had been unjustly treated brought down the royal displeasure on his head, and he went the way of Grenville the next year. For want of a better alternative, George now turned back to Pitt. The old quarrel was glossed over; Pitt readily believed that the country stood in need of him once more; and under the new title of the Earl of Chatham he again entered into power. But his health was now precarious; his ancient fire was spent; and soon he too retired, leaving his colleague Grafton to carry on the Government alone. Such chopping and changing was of course deplorable, but it was all in King George's game. During these "stop-gap" ministries he was industriously at work building up the party of *his* "friends". All shame was cast aside; and he made no secret of the means he used. Did a member of Parliament retire or die; before the day was out, George was considering the selection of a suitable successor. Political agents, acting in his interest, purchased the right to nominate men for parliamentary seats and paid enormous prices. To secure the needful votes in Windsor borough he actually hired houses in the town, and made them over to the nominal tenancy of his game-keepers or cooks. Bribes he handed round with a generous prodigality; and, since the royal pocket-money

was drawn from the public funds, George proved, as someone has remarked, a most expensive King. Such tactics, however, fulfilled their purpose well. Before ten years were out from his accession, George had the House securely in his clutches. The Whigs were routed; royal nominees, who fancied themselves Tories, were filling up the benches; and, when in 1770 Grafton's retirement aptly cleared the way, George was at length able to promote a man after his own heart—Lord North. North was a pleasant fellow with a pretty wit and great gifts of fluent speech. He was tenacious, obstinate, and even plucky at a crisis; but he lacked principle, and, more loyal to his King than to his country, he allowed himself to become a willing tool. He was wise enough to see where George's insane policies were leading; but in his own interest he was also wise enough to hold his tongue. He had made the fatal compact and he stood by it to the end. He acquiesced in a treatment of the colonies of which in his secret heart he disapproved; when the great rebellion came, he admitted his conviction of the error; then buckled to once more in pursuance of a policy which he had long thought to be mistaken, which he knew now to be fatal, and which he was yet prepared to carry through to its bitter and irreparable end. A zeal so dishonest, so misguided, yet so unswervingly loyal and self consistent, almost compels our admiration along with our contempt.

II

The alienation of the Thirteen British Colonies in North America was a prolonged and gradual process. It began directly upon the close of the Seven Years' War. Twelve years then passed in futile argument and growing bitterness before the first open blows were struck; and, though it was North himself who finally clinched the matter, most of the preceding ministries had had a share in it and in one way or another helped to prepare the way for the calamity. Before, however, we can relate their acts in detail, it is necessary to grasp well the general situation, and to

appreciate the attitude of mind in which the British Government approached the whole question of colonial policy. Colonies were not in those days, as they are to-day, a source of confidence or pride. Nobody much troubled about making maps with the lands of the British Empire coloured red. No one noted as yet with a glow of satisfaction how the sun was cheered upon his daily travels by the continual presence of the Union Jack. Our interest in the colonies began and ended with the consideration of *what good we could get out of them*. The first and most obvious advantage was their trade, and to the best of our ability we had ensured that all their trade—in exports as well as imports—should be conducted exclusively with ourselves. By the famous Navigation Act of 1651, no goods might be transported either to or from our colonies except on British ships. That Act was still in force; and besides this we kept a strict watch upon the nature of the goods that the colonies sent over. Manufactures or raw materials such as were likely to compete with our home industries were ruthlessly excluded. The interest of the home-country was considered paramount; and the interest of the colonies was at all points sacrificed thereto. It is therefore important to remember that throughout the coming struggle the Americans were wholly and solely dependent upon England, whether as a market for their produce or as a source of their supplies. The second idea—more justifiable in the main—was this; that the colonies should make some contribution to the British revenues. Now, it is true that, apart from a crown deputy sent out from England, most of the states were now self-governing. They elected their own parliaments, made their own laws, and, as far as all local matters were concerned, managed their own finance. But there was another side to the question; for the fleet and army which the British revenues supported were employed, in part at least, for the colonies' protection. This truth had been abundantly brought home in recent years. The overthrow of France in Canada had come as an inestimable boon to the colonials; but the victory was due

in the main to British troops ; it had been an expensive business ; and it seemed only fair that those who had reaped most profit from the war should also take their share in the burden of its cost. To tax the colonies as well as to control their trade was, therefore, a right which nobody in England ever doubted to be ours ; and to these two principles the British Government adhered with a blind unquestioning confidence in the righteousness of their behaviour and the justice of their case. It would be unfair, however, to suppose the British Government more selfish or short-sighted in this matter than the governments of other European countries. On the contrary, our attitude was, if anything, more generous and enlightened than was the custom of the times. We went to considerable lengths in the attempt to conciliate the American colonials ; and had not the colonials been bred of a particularly stiff-necked stock, we should probably have succeeded in retaining their allegiance. The point rather to be noted is that we realised only in the dimmest fashion the importance of retaining it. Our overseas possessions were then, let us remember, a comparatively recent acquisition ; the idea of a world empire had appealed as yet to very few ; and the theory of the times was that colonies were a mixed blessing—useful for commercial purposes, but otherwise a nuisance. No one regarded them as a source of national strength. No one expected them to remain ours in perpetuity. They were like the fruit on a tree, destined, as soon as ever they were ripe, to drop off from the parent stem.

Such then were the ideas and motives which inspired the unhappy policy of George's ministers. It was George Grenville, Bute's successor, who first set the ball a-rolling ; and, seeing the circumstances in which he stood, we cannot altogether blame him if he failed to see to what goal its course would tend. At the close of the Seven Years' War, England was overburdened by her load of debt. She needed every penny which could be scraped together ; and Grenville was shocked to learn that the total sum collected at the colonial custom-houses amounted only to a paltry

£2000 per annum. The plain fact was that the dues imposed by England on the imports and exports of America were habitually evaded. Smuggling was taking place on an enormous scale, and Americans had come to regard illicit trading almost as their privilege and right. Grenville did what he could to screw things up, and to sharpen the vigilance of the custom-house officials. This step in itself was most unpopular, but it did not stand alone. The maintenance of a small standing army in America was then held to be essential, and, in order to make the colonies contribute to its upkeep, Grenville proceeded to introduce a novel tax. This tax, known as the Stamp Tax, though now so famous in history, was in itself a trifling matter. Henceforward every legal document drawn up between colonials was to receive a stamp which could be purchased at a price from the British Government's officials. Thus from every civil contract—for the purchase of a property, the transference of title deeds, execution of a will or whatever it might be—a small sum was to accrue to the British Treasury. From so insignificant a spark was the great conflagration kindled; for it was the Stamp Act more than all else which first aroused in the colonials the bitter spirit of resistance. They protested, they argued, and, finding argument quite useless, they finally refused point blank to buy the stamps. It was not so much the form of the tax itself that they objected to as the principle which it involved. Most of them came, it must be remembered, from an extremely independent, freedom-loving stock. They were the grandsons and great-grandsons of the Puritan emigrants of the preceding century; and long exile had not increased their affection for a land which had treated their ancestors so scurvily. They had never loved England very much, and since Canada had been conquered, and the French menace on their border thus removed, they had ceased any more to look to her even for protection and support. All they asked was to be left alone; and, tax them if we must, they would have preferred at least to settle the manner of taxation at their own convenience. By what right, they asked, should

a small group of men in London arrange the business of self-governing communities three thousand miles away? The British Parliament was not their Parliament. They sent no members to its consultations; and, by a principle as old as Magna Charta, free citizens were under no obligation to pay taxes except with their own or their representatives' consent. "No Taxation without Representation" became henceforth their cry. Obviously it would be an error to suppose that in these early days any clear understanding as yet existed of this great democratic principle. The eighteenth century colonials could hardly have conceived the possibility of sending representatives over to Great Britain. Nevertheless, they felt strongly that they had a grievance, because they themselves had never been consulted. As with their Puritan forefathers before them, nothing could rouse in them such obstinate resentment as any infringement of their "rights". An offence against their liberty was like an insult to their God; and they were prepared to die, if need be, rather than to abandon it.

The history of the whole long miserable quarrel which ensued makes but sad reading; there was blindness and obstinacy enough on either side, but on the side of the British ministers, at least, there was moral cowardice as well. They had neither the pluck to admit that they were wrong nor the courage to act as though they thought that they were right. What they gave with one hand they proceeded forthwith to take away with the other; and their half-hearted concessions were perhaps more galling to the colonies than even a consistent policy of coercion would have been. First, when Rockingham succeeded to George Grenville, he gave his consent to the withdrawal of the Stamp tax, but with the same breath he equally insisted on England's right to tax if she desired. Next, when the colonials were beginning to calm down again and the noise of this first quarrel had all but died away, a fresh and gratuitous insult was flung at them. While Pitt, who would have known better, was ill with gout, the brilliant and popular Chancellor of the Exchequer, Charles Townshend,

imposed a fresh series of small taxes on paper, glass, and tea. The last, in particular, reawoke the colonies' resentment in all its former fury. The Tea tax was actually a trifle—a mere 1s. on the pound—and, when all the tea imported to America was reckoned, it could not have brought in £500 a year. The Americans, it is true, were great tea-drinkers; it was their favourite beverage; yet the effect upon their comfort was as nothing compared with the blow dealt to their pride. Had it been a tax on something which they never even wanted, their indignation would have been the same. They protested, as usual, and, what was far more serious, they retaliated. The people of Massachusetts took the lead. A boycott was begun against English goods. They refused to buy the East Indian tea which English ships brought over; and, though it cost them many a shiver when the winds were cold, they refused the good woollen clothes which came from the English hand-loom. In their present mood they would rather have gone naked and starving than abandon the principle on which they had taken their stand. The boycott was a bold challenge and a severe blow to English traders; and the egregious Duke of Grafton, who now took on the Government from Pitt, was seriously perturbed. Retaliation, however, is a game which two can play; and, hoping to cow the colonials into submission, he proceeded to send troops across the water (as though soldiers could force any man to purchase tea or clothing against his own free will!) The troops when they arrived were quartered in Boston, the chief town of Massachusetts. The inhabitants, as was natural, received them with coldness and a dignified contempt; and the soldiers returned their coldness with insolent behaviour. The privates brawled; the officers got drunk; tempers went from bad to worse; and the air became electric. One March day in '70 the Boston mob waylaid a party of soldiers in the street and pelted them with snow-balls. A volley of bullets was the answer, and three civilians fell. The uproar was tremendous; bells rang; drums rolled; mass meetings collected; and, had

not the garrison been tactfully withdrawn out of the town, still worse might have ensued. Other and more serious incidents soon attracted men's attention; but the Boston "Massacre" was not forgotten. It was first blood in a conflict which, come whatever might, could now only end one way.

America in those days seemed very far away. It took six or seven weeks to cross the ocean; and at such a distance it was difficult for Englishmen to understand what Americans were feeling. Nevertheless, even before the news of the Boston massacre arrived, the Grafton Ministry had taken fright. Lord Grafton himself was prepared for an unconditional withdrawal of the obnoxious taxes. The Paper tax and Glass tax were actually withdrawn; but the Tea tax was the subject of a more prolonged debate. The King insisted on the importance of retaining it. Lord North, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, backed him up. Grafton faltered, gave way, and presently resigned. Lord North then stepped into his shoes, and the evil genius of coercion triumphed. The word went out that concessions were now ended; there was to be no more shilly-shally with the impudent colonials; and, simply to teach them a proper sense of their position, the Tea tax was ostentatiously maintained. This might sound well enough perhaps at Westminster; but no one could have failed more utterly than North to appreciate the temper of the men with whom he had to deal. He imagined that what annoyed them was the enhanced price, and that, provided tea were cheapened, the colonials would speedily be tempted into buying it. His plan, therefore, was this: the East India Company, which had been seriously affected by the refusal of the colonies to buy its tea, was now allowed permission to export direct to Boston instead of sending, as was usual, through an English port. Thus, while the price of tea would be lowered, the tax on tea would, at the same time, be maintained; and North believed that the Americans were simpletons enough to fall into the trap. It was a grotesque illusion. Nettled by the mere suggestion of so

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gross and obvious a bribe, the citizens of Boston resolved on their revenge. A party of young men, dressed up in paint and feathers like Red Indians, boarded the Company's vessels when they arrived in port and tipped the cargo wholesale overboard, "to see," as one of them mischievously remarked, "whether tea could be made with salt water". It was not a bad practical joke; but the Boston "tea-party" brought more serious consequences in its train than even the Boston massacre itself; for the violence of the colonials merely served to stiffen the backs of their oppressors. King George himself was adamant; and official reports from the other side the water encouraged him to meditate revenge. "These men will be lions," he echoed with approval, "so long as we are lambs"; and Lord North, as usual, backed him up.

Boston's punishment was not long delayed. The harbour was forthwith ordered to be closed and its trade connections severed. Of Massachusetts a stern example was to be made: that State was to lose its Parliament, forego its rights of proved self-government, and be degraded to the ignominious rank of a crown-colony, controlled direct from England. Even here at home voices were raised in protest against this monstrous measure. "These men are our children," Edmund Burke declared, "and when children ask for bread we are not right to offer them a stone." Fox spoke to the same purpose; but all in vain. The King and North were deaf to argument; they held on grimly to their chosen course. The blockade of Boston harbour was begun, and within a fortnight the pinch of want was making itself felt within the city. But succour was at hand. Supplies of every sort poured in from all sides; rice came from Carolina; Connecticut sent sheep; but, more valuable and more significant than such material tokens of their sympathy, the twelve surrounding colonies were answering the appeal of Massachusetts and taking measures to consult together on a plan of common action. Thus, in an evil hour, the old differences and feuds, which had long kept the various States aloof and jealous, were now cast spontaneously aside.

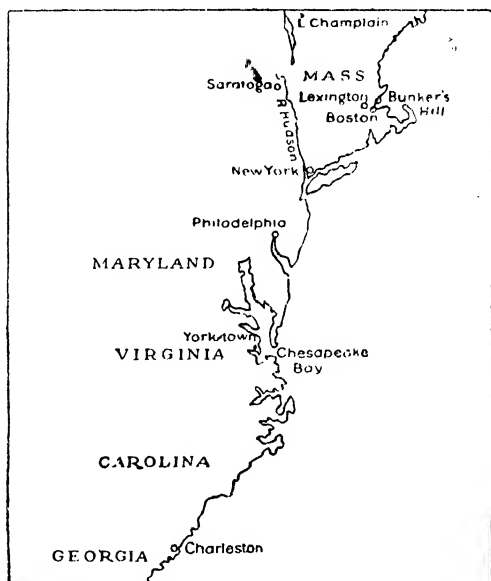
There was opposition, of course ; but those who disapproved of the policy of resistance were overpersuaded or coerced, and America spoke, or seemed to speak, as with one voice. The delegates of the Great Congress, which was called at Philadelphia, gave remarkable expression to this new-found unity. Like the old champions of liberty in England, they, too, drew up a Declaration of their Rights, claiming a free hand for their colonial parliaments in all internal matters of legislation and finance. It was a proud, an audacious, but, withal, a peaceful demonstration. War they still hoped, if possible, to avert. But war none the less was drawing daily nearer with ever quickening step.

Too late and too grudgingly North now essayed a compromise. He suggested in Parliament that any colony which should guarantee a fixed contribution to the King's Exchequer should be left free to raise the money in whatever fashion it preferred. The proposal, however, fell flat ; and North, abandoning the attempt, turned once more to face the music. And, indeed, the music was now growing loud and menacing, with ugly sounds of tumult and sedition. Tales came of riot and mob rule, of English vessels burnt to the water's edge, of guns and ammunition secretly prepared. Gage, the military governor recently sent over, had discovered and seized a store of arms in the neighbourhood of Boston. Men were collecting and drilling in increasing numbers, and the Massachusetts Congress had voted them supplies. In April of '75 Gage learnt that the rebels were again collecting arms not far from Boston ; and he dispatched a small contingent of his troops to seize them. As they passed the village of Lexington upon their outward march the red-coats fell in with a party of revolutionary militia, fired on them, and felled some half-a-dozen. The bad news spread fast ; more colonists soon gathered ; and, when later in the day the English were returning to their camp at Boston, they found themselves suddenly surrounded on the road. They fought their way through, though not without serious loss ; but, as they struggled home, only too thankful to escape from worse disaster, they realised that

at last the day had come. The war had opened; and opened with an ominous defeat for British arms.

III

It was in April of 1775 that the disastrous skirmish at Lexington took place. Next year on the ever-memorable



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE WAR OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

day, July the Fourth, the Congress of Philadelphia issued another manifesto abjuring all allegiance to the British Crown, and solemnly declaring the Independence of the "United States of America". In 1783, after eight chequered years of desultory warfare, a treaty was signed at Versailles whereby this historic claim was countersigned by England, and the American colonies passed out of our

keeping for ever. From a military standpoint, and when all the resources of English generalship and man-power are computed, such an issue must appear well-nigh incredible; yet from first to last conditions were against us, and the task of defeating the colonials was by no means so easy as it seemed. The problem of organisation alone was overwhelming. At no period of the war did we succeed in putting more than forty thousand men into the field; and in days when steamships were not invented, and when the voyage occupied six solid weeks, it was no trifling matter to transport these troops across three thousand miles of ocean, and there to keep them furnished with ammunition and supplies. For this purpose a line of communications had to be maintained, and when other nations came into the war against us, this placed an almost intolerable strain upon our fleet. By land the warfare was of a character least advantageous to European troops, and the climate, whether in the cold winters of the north or in the hot unhealthy summers of the south, was almost equally demoralising. On the other hand, the enemy himself was ill prepared. What troops he had were raw, untrained, and at first scantily equipped with obsolete muskets and clumsy rust-eaten cannon. When, too, it came to military action, the show of unity displayed at Philadelphia was hopeless to seek. Each state preferred to raise a little local army of its own, and jealously refused to part with its protection or lend assistance to the central force. In fact, the revolt would have fizzled out within a year, had it not been for the invincible determination of a single man. It was George Washington, and he alone, who kept the cause together. From the day of Braddock's defeat at Fort Duquesne he had lived a soldier's life, learning to find his way over mountain or through thicket, and to sleep in any weather under an open sky. Nothing could tire him; nothing could daunt his faith in the great cause. In the darkest hours of defeat and disappointment he at least was always ready to hold on, and when half of his force had fallen, and the other half were dispersing to their homes,

he would remain to rally fresh contingents and lead them against the enemy once more.

The war lasted eight years, and during the three first of these at least the scene of action lay wholly in the north. Lord Howe, who was sent out to take command, clung for some while to his head-quarters in Boston, and the result of his first sortie against Bunker's Hill was not encouraging. He attacked this neighbouring height without due thought or preparation. The colonials were deeply entrenched; it took three separate assaults to drive them out; and the victory, such as it was, cost Howe nearly half his men. Next year, however, he moved further afield, shifting his head-quarters southward from Boston to Long Island, capturing New York, and driving back Washington upon the hinterland. This success inspired a bolder plan of action for the next year's campaign. The scheme which was hatched in London was as follows: General Burgoyne was to advance from Canada, Lord Howe was to join him from New York, and their combined forces were to hold the Hudson Valley, thus dividing the rebels of New England from the rebels of the south. This grand scheme, however, was sadly bungled by the War Office in London, and the dispatch which should have kept him in touch with Burgoyne's movements never reached Lord Howe. He went off on a fool's errand against Philadelphia, hoping presumably to discredit the rebel Congress by the capture of the town. The task proved more difficult than he had fancied. Washington hung on his flank and refused to be shaken off. The summer passed without anything to show for it. Winter followed; and it was not till the August after that Lord Howe's troops effected their entry into Philadelphia. Meanwhile Burgoyne had started in accordance with the plan. He passed up the Richelieu River, and reached Ticonderoga of ill-fame; but as yet no sign appeared of the army from the south. Hampered by an enormous train of baggage, and harassed by rebel sharpshooters and Indians, he lumbered on as far as Saratoga; but of Howe there was still no sign. With every day the

colonial skirmishers became more numerous; Burgoyne's nerve was shaken; the communications in his rear were cut; and he at last decided to retreat. But it was now too late. His spent and starving army was unequal to the task, and on the 6th of August they surrendered to a man. The news of that surrender put fresh heart into the rebels. It spread consternation among the councils of the King, and, above all, it gave the Americans a new and invaluable ally. This last fact was decisive, for summoning, as it did, the Frenchmen to their aid, the colonials' victory at Saratoga proved the turning-point of the whole campaign.

The Seven Years' War and the humiliation which it brought her had been neither forgiven nor forgotten by France. During the interval she had husbanded her resources and built up an efficient fleet, and, as she awaited an opportunity to use it, she had watched with unfeigned satisfaction the outbreak of the war in North America and the growing embarrassment of British arms. The surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga now decided her, and in 1779 she entered the struggle at the colonials' side, an example soon to be followed first by Spain and then by Holland. Thus England was once more faced by a hostile continental combination, and this time without a continental friend. The two most formidable fleets of Europe threatened her, and her peril was so obvious that even Lord North quailed. Many of the Opposition were for making terms with the colonials. Burke and Fox urged that their independence should be recognised. But at this supreme crisis, as on a similar occasion twenty years before, all eyes turned instinctively to Pitt. The old man's fighting days indeed were over; he was far past politics. Prolonged gout had left him physically a wreck, and at times even his clear brain was clouded by hallucination. Yet he roused himself to a last heroic effort. The long and futile quarrel with the colonies had cut him to the quick, and he had never approved of the King's policy. "We have no right under Heaven," he had told the House of Lords, "to tax America." When the war began, he had prophesied its

failure. "You may ravage," he had said, "but you can never conquer"; and surely enough his words were coming true. But now when he saw France, his life-long enemy, ranged with the colonies against us, his whole attitude underwent a sudden transformation. He came down to the House supported on two crutches; the Lords stood up in line to let him pass, and then in awe-struck silence listened to the passionate rhetoric of his last appeal. "My Lords," he said, "I rejoice that the grave has not closed upon me; that I am still alive, to lift up my voice against the dismemberment of this ancient and most noble monarchy! Shall this great kingdom now fall prostrate before the House of Bourbon? *If we must fall, let us fall like men.*" A moment or two after he staggered, collapsed in a swoon upon his neighbour's arms, and was carried from the House a dying man. So by fate's cruel irony he had lived just long enough to see his life's work ruined and the triumphs of his manhood thrown away, when the strength to strike yet a second blow was his no longer. It was France's hour of revenge.

It was clear from the outset that the additional struggle in which England now found herself involved with France and Spain must be an entirely maritime affair. Our hands were too fully occupied in North America to undertake land operations elsewhere, and we now possessed no allies to undertake them for us. Even at sea the task confronting our navy was tremendous. The French and Spanish fleets were very powerful, and, had not their admirals adopted a defensive strategy in the main, it must have gone hardly with us. As it was, we were practically compelled to leave the Mediterranean unpoliced, with the result that Minorca fell once more into French hands. Gibraltar, which General Elliott was left to hold as best he could with seven thousand men, was attacked from the land side by the Spanish, and from '79 onwards laid under close siege. For three years the garrison held out against enormous odds, and, though revictualled by Rodney in the second year, they suffered terribly from starvation and disease. The ordeal, however,

reached its climax, when in 1782 the enemy proceeded to organise a grand assault by sea as well as land. 33,000 men and over a hundred ships took part in this attack. Floating batteries were mounted on enormous rafts, and a new type of cannon was employed which discharged its balls red hot. The British, however, rose to the occasion. Their fire set the floating batteries alight, blowing both guns and gunners into the air. The grand assault collapsed, and, thanks to Elliott's magnificent defence, Gibraltar remained ours. Meanwhile the centre of action between the opposing fleets had shifted to the further side of the Atlantic. The enemy divided his attention between capturing the smaller and least defensible of our West Indian Islands and lending assistance to the Americans on land. Rodney, our admiral, was on the whole successful in keeping his own end up, and, though when our land forces were driven to surrender he was absent from the scene, his revenge was not long delayed. In 1782 he caught the French fleet off a small group of islands called "the Saints," and beat them handsomely. His tactics were as novel as they were audacious. Instead of fighting a mere broadside battle of the accustomed type, he adopted a stratagem which Nelson afterwards made famous, breaking through the enemy's line at two separate points, and hammering the isolated portion of their fleet to pieces before the rest could manœuvre to its aid. Only an unaccountable failure to press his victory home saved the French from complete annihilation. Rodney, indeed, was one of the few men who came out of the war with flying colours; yet even he was relieved of his command by the ungrateful Government.

This war, however, was not, like the previous war, to be decided mainly on the seas. The reduction of the colonists was after all the chief object of our efforts; and this, as Pitt had prophesied, was to prove beyond our power. Nevertheless, the scene of our defeat was not to lie in the neighbourhood of Boston or New York. Soon after the entry of France into the war, we had undertaken other operations further south. Among the southern colonies of

Georgia, Carolina, and Virginia were many aristocratic landowners, who were royalists by extraction and still loyalists at heart. Counting on their support we landed a fresh army on the coast of Georgia, which captured Charleston, pushed north through Carolina to Virginia, and there took up its position at Yorktown on Chesapeake Bay. Cornwallis, the commander of this force, was no contemptible soldier; but, while he appeared at first to be sweeping all before him, he was in reality marching to his doom. Our northern army under Clinton, still quartered at New York, made no move to reinforce him. His own troops were totally inadequate to hold the ground which he had conquered in his rear; and presently a new and most unwelcome enemy appeared upon the scene—a French fleet under the Comte de Grasse. The small British squadron which patrolled the coast, was unable to hold its own against these new arrivals; and Cornwallis soon found himself in perilous isolation, cut off from all hope of reinforcement or supply by sea. Yet there was worse to follow. For plans were now afoot to attack him and overwhelm him from the land as well. Washington had hitherto been watching Clinton's army at New York; but, as soon as he got news of the French fleet's arrival in Chesapeake Bay, his mind was immediately made up. He breathed not a word of his intention to a single soul: he forestalled the suspicions of the English by supplying them deliberately with garbled information which kept Clinton immobile at New York. He then withdrew all the forces that could possibly be spared from the northern area, and marched them at top speed four hundred miles down country toward Cornwallis's Yorktown camp. Reinforcements poured in to him from every side; and, when the American forces closed in upon Cornwallis, they outnumbered him by more than two to one. Desperate messages for help went north to Clinton; but Clinton still delayed; and, when in late autumn he at last moved south, it was to find the worst had happened. Demoralised by the hot unwholesome climate and overwhelmed by the

bombardment of the rebel guns, the British force at Yorktown had failed to hold its own. Their attempt at retreat had been frustrated and Cornwallis's army had surrendered to a man.

The news fell on England like a thunderclap. "Oh God! it is all over," North is said to have exclaimed; and seeing the hopelessness of his position he resigned. King George, like Pharaoh of old, still hardened his heart and endeavoured to hold on. But popular feeling was too strong for him. The London magnates passed a sweeping protest against the continuance of the war: "Your armies are captured," they declared roundly to the King; "the wonted superiority of your navies is annihilated; your dominions are lost." And George was finally compelled to bow to fate. Peace was signed at Versailles in '83. A few minor changes were effected. Florida and Minorca were given to Spain; some of our West Indian Islands went to France; the rest we got back. But the Treaty's main provision concerned America. The independence of the United States was thereby recognised. The infant Republic, one day destined to span the mighty continent from sea to sea, was thus launched on its career; and George Washington, the hero of its battlefields, became its first President upon the dawn of peace. It was perhaps the worst humiliation which England has ever suffered. There was one bright spot, however, to relieve the general gloom. Canada had been loyal throughout the war and remained ours still; so equally did India. If Chatham had lived long enough to see that day, it would have comforted him to know that of all his work this part at least had not been wholly in vain.

CHAPTER X

INDIA

IT was perhaps King George's fortune rather than his fault that we retained our hold on India. The long arm of royal interference, employed to so ruinous a purpose in North America, was hardly long enough to reach into the East. Space alone set something of a bar to such meddlesome activities; for, if the voyage from Bristol to New York then took a good six weeks, the route round the Cape to India could seldom be accomplished in less than as many months. Nor, strictly speaking, were our settlements at Calcutta and Madras to be reckoned as Crown property at all. The occupation had been from the first a commercial enterprise; and a commercial enterprise it still remained. The East India Company might fly the Union Jack and summon British regiments to its aid; but, its possessions and its profits, its forts and its officials, belonged, not to His Majesty King George, but to the various private gentlemen in England who were fortunate enough to own its valuable shares. In short, if anyone controlled the destinies of British India, it was the Company's directors, who sat in a London office, and the men whom the directors appointed to go out and administer affairs upon the spot. Hence the early governors, for better or for worse, were given a remarkably free hand. They understood far better than their employers home in London the peculiar problems of the East; and, though they did not choose to imitate the methods of Dupleix or assume the pomp and trappings of a native prince, they at least carried things with a high hand and undertook

the most tremendous policies with the irresponsibility of monarchs. For men were bound to adapt themselves to their surroundings ; and, if the governors acted in an autocratic manner, it was because no other means existed whereby a single European could command a million Asiatics. If they made at times too free a use of force, it was because force was the argument which the native could most readily understand. If they resorted occasionally to fraud, it was because the Oriental rarely knew any other code than to cheat or to be cheated. Judged by European standards, much that was done was shameful, and, though the governors enjoyed great licence while in India, they could not escape the critics when their term was up. Whig politicians, who had never seen a native in their lives, but loved to prate of liberty and the rights of man, denounced with gusto the monstrous tyrannies of a Clive or Warren Hastings, and assailed them on evidence at which the Great Mogul would have snapped his royal fingers in contempt. Yet, whatever were their errors or their crimes, these great men had deserved well both of England and of India ; and the censure of their critics missed the mark, because it utterly ignored the circumstances in which they had been placed. "My God! Mr. Chairman," exclaimed Clive, when taxed with a present he accepted from Mir Jaffir, "at this moment I stand astonished at my own moderation."

With the close of the Seven Years' War, our permanence in India was finally assured. French rivalry was at an end. Plassey had given us Bengal, and Wandewash had removed all menace to Madras. Yet the actual territory we held was small—the lower Ganges basin in the north, a few scattered strips along the south-east coast, and a mere station on the west—nor was it our policy for the next thirty years to add to these possessions. Rather it was our task to render our whole position in India more stable and secure. For the country was still in a wild turmoil. The break-up of the Mogul Empire had rent her into a thousand warring factions, and the hand of every prince

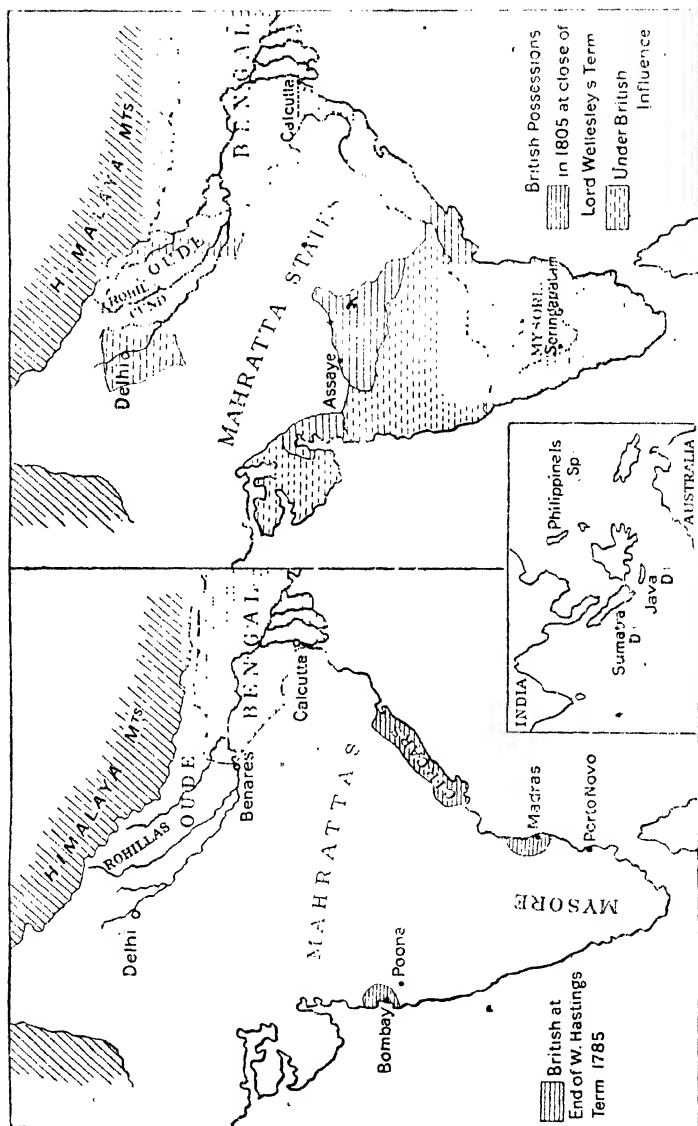
was against his neighbour. Of all the powers, however, which were at enmity with peace, the most dreaded and the most destructive was the great robber race of the Mahrattas, who now held sway over a wide strip of central India stretching from sea to sea. This formidable scourge was a constant menace to the safety of our settlements; and war after war was undertaken to reduce it. Between 1776 and 1782 there were many fierce encounters; yet the Mahratta terror was then but barely checked. At the end of the century (as we shall see) our arms were more successful; but it was not until after Waterloo was fought that this vigorous tribe was thoroughly subdued. Their activities, however, had one good effect; for the fear they instilled into other native princes gave us the opportunity for improving our relations elsewhere. Once recognised as allies and protectors, it was easy for us to extend the area of our influence; and, though it was not till the time of the Napoleonic wars that we added to our territorial conquests, our prestige was in the meanwhile steadily increasing, and with every year that passed it was becoming plainer that the British power alone could rescue India from interminable chaos. But, while this truth was slow to force itself home upon the native mind, there was equally for ourselves another lesson to be mastered. We had blundered into possession, as has above been shown, in the pursuit of trade; but we had hardly as yet become conscious of a mission, or seen that, if India was ever to be permanently ours, she must be governed, not in our interest, but in her own. Hitherto high dividends had been the main object of the enterprise; and the Company's directors thought of little else. Though vast profits were derived from the increasing trade, the methods by which these profits were obtained were not considered; and the servants of the Company were still abominably paid. The unfortunate result was this: that, to compensate for the poorness of their salaries, the officials looked to recoup themselves by plundering the natives. Every species of extortion, blackmail, and fraud was practised without shame; and men, who were legitimately

earning no more than a clerk's pittance, came home from India with enormous fortunes. The retiring "nabob," as he was dubbed at home, was already a by-word for his luxurious habits and his purse well filled with ill-gotten rupees wrung from the helpless natives during his sojourn in the East. In short, the real problem confronting us in India was not so much the extension of our conquests as the reform of our administrative system and the better regulation of our finance.

Such, then, was the situation when Clive was again sent out in 1765 as Governor of Bengal. He remained only a year and a half; but during that time he showed himself no less great as a statesman than as a general on the field. His first step was to place the government of Bengal on a firm and regular basis. Since the day when Mir Jaffar had been set up in Surajah Dowlah's place, the real powers had, of course, passed out of the hands of the native ruler; but he still continued to exercise his functions and to raise the revenues himself, though he paid over the bulk of them to the English Company. The result of this was woeful mismanagement and a twofold system of extortion; and Clive at once determined to bring it to an end. In the name of the Company he proceeded to take over the entire control. The Nabob was reduced to a mere titular puppet with an annual allowance to support him, while the whole management of the province—the collecting of the taxes, the maintenance of order, and the administration of justice—was vested in the Company itself. It was a vital and beneficial change; for it became henceforth our interest (as it was undoubtedly our duty) to see that taxes were fairly assessed and properly collected; and in principle, at any rate, if not as yet in practice, equity was thereby substituted for a policy of plunder. But this reform would not alone suffice unless the private avarice of individuals was also kept in check. The Company itself refused to rectify the scandal of low wages; but Clive, on his own responsibility, diverted a part of the revenue to this necessary purpose. He then followed up the change by making it illegal for

any servant of the Company to take bribes or gifts from natives. The new rule, however, was difficult to enforce, and it had barely begun to take effect when Clive, who alone had the strength or courage to enforce it, was compelled by ill-health to relinquish his command. His reforms had given check to the evil; but they had certainly not cured it; and meanwhile at home they had won for Clive the bitter enmity of the Company's shareholders, who were far less interested in justice and good government than in the annual balance-sheet. Reform, so they imagined, would affect their purse; and they took a mean revenge. In his earlier days Clive had scarcely practised the principles he now was preaching: he had taken bribes from natives; and on this score he was assailed. His case was carried before Parliament, where the Company was strong, and there after long discussions the verdict was returned that, although he had rendered "great and meritorious services" to Britain, Clive had employed his powers in India to obtain illicit gains. The cruelty of this ingratitude had a terrible effect upon his failing health. His mind became partially unhinged; and in 1774 he ended his brilliant and honourable career—as in youth he had twice so nearly forestalled it—by committing suicide.

Once Parliament's eyes had been opened to the scandals of the Company's misrule, it became imperative to interfere still further. No attempt, indeed, was made as yet to relieve the directors of their main responsibility; and it was not until the years following the Mutiny that India was taken under the direct authority of Parliament. In 1773, however, an Act was passed by Lord North's Government which was designed to set the Company's administration upon a more constitutional and efficient footing. The directors were still to retain, as in the past, their right of appointing and controlling their officials; but for the future such appointments were, in the first place, to be submitted for the approval of the King, and, in the second place, they were to follow certain definite lines which the Act itself laid down. Thus there was to be one Governor-



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General for all our Indian provinces. With him was to be associated a Council of four persons, three votes in which were sufficient to defeat and overrule the Governor himself; while side by side with the Governor and Council and altogether outside their jurisdiction there was to be another body of independent power called the Supreme Court of Justice. Such were the provisions of the Regulating Act of 1773. A worse machinery for strong and effective government could scarcely have been devised; and thus from the start obstacles which would have been insurmountable to a less able man were set across the path of the first Governor-General, Warren Hastings.

Hastings was no stranger to the East. He had been a Company's clerk in early days. Once he had fallen as a prisoner into Surajah Dowlah's hands. He had survived and risen to be Governor of Calcutta two years before he entered the new office of Governor-General for all India. He knew the country like a book, spoke the native lingo fluently, and, what is more, could penetrate the recesses of the Oriental mind. Very different were his colleagues of the newly-appointed Council. One of them indeed was an old member of the service and gave Hastings his support; but the other three were ignorant of the East and bitterly opposed to Hastings' policy; while one in particular, Francis by name, was a man of singularly mean and spiteful character. Between such men and Hastings there could be no peace; and, by the peculiar constitution of the Council, Hastings, if out-voted by three out of the four, was altogether powerless. Friction sprang up at once. The Governor-General was thwarted at every turn. His authority was reduced to a shadow; and the natives, quick to spurn a fallen potentate, joined eagerly in the attack. The climax came when a certain ill-conditioned Brahmin, of the name of Nuncomar, put into Francis' hands a serious list of charges against Hastings' administration. Everyone knew that an old grudge had inspired this base attack; for Nuncomar had been imprisoned for forgery by Hastings, and subsequently refused promotion to a much coveted

post. Nevertheless, Francis and his friends took up the charge, and things looked black for Hastings. But Hastings was a man of indomitable spirit, and he was not beaten yet. There was now established at Calcutta the Supreme Court of Justice of which we spoke above, and which was, as we then noted, independent of the Council of Five. Impey, its President, was Hastings' friend; and, to the surprise of all and not least of Nuncomar, he suddenly put the engine of the law in motion. Nuncomar was arrested on the charge of felony committed, so it was alleged, six years before. He was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged; and despite the vigorous efforts of the Francis party, despite the peculiar sanctity attaching to the prisoner's Brahmin caste, the sentence of the court was carried out. Hastings' enemies had been outplayed; and though the feud still lingered, rising on one occasion to so fierce a pitch that a duel was actually fought between the rivals, yet by slow degrees the Governor-General came into his own. A vacancy on the Council gave him for a while an equality of votes; and, when in 1780 Francis went back to England, Hastings was at length complete master of the situation. The absurd provisions of the Regulating Act were no more to shackle progress; for, before another Governor came out, the bad system had been changed.

Meanwhile, during his thirteen years of office,¹ whether in good fortune or ill, opposed or unopposed, Hastings had done great things. Fighting had been incessant, perilous, yet on the whole successful for our arms. The Mahrattas were once again upon the war-path, and were bullying their neighbours right and left. First in the north they had threatened Rohilcund, a subject province of our friend the Vizier of Oude. Oude had become our ally in the days of Clive; and the Vizier's appeal for help was answered readily by Hastings. He assisted in pushing the Mahrattas back; then, finding or suspecting that the folk of

¹ Governor of Calcutta, 1772-1774; Governor-General of British India, 1774-1785.

Rohilcund were themselves in league with the enemy, he had joined the Vizier in suppressing them. The campaign was ruthlessly conducted, and brought a deal of obloquy on Hastings' head. But from this time onward and for many years to come peace reigned to the north-west of Bengal (1774). The next trouble with the Mahrattas came in the region of Bombay, now our chief settlement upon the western coast. There, most unwisely and against all Hastings' wishes, our authorities had supported a claimant to the throne of Poona. This brought down the Mahrattas on us in a twinkling, and Hastings only retrieved a desperate situation by dispatching reinforcements from Bengal across the whole breadth of India. Yet more serious trouble was even now in store. For, just when our resources were thus severely strained, the Mahrattas found in the south two valuable allies. One was our old enemy the French, who, on entering the war of the American Rebellion, had revived their slumbering designs on India. The other was Hyder Ali, the "Sultan" of Mysore, a very able and ambitious native who had raised and trained a formidable army, and carved out for himself by an adventurous policy a considerable empire in the south. Hastings was not slow to realise the danger. His plan of campaign was sketched out within a day; and Sir Eyre Coote, the veteran hero of the fight at Wandewash, was sent south to deal with Hyder Ali. Coote caught him at Porto Novo, and won a decisive victory against enormous odds. Hyder Ali himself died in the year following; the French meanwhile had been defeated on the sea,¹ and the critical days were over. Thus, as Hastings' term of office drew to its close, he could justly claim to have brought us through our troubles; and, though he knew as no one else could know how perilously near we had been to total ruin, his nerve had stood the test. Our position in India, as he

¹The maritime supremacy, which we won during the middle of the eighteenth century and maintained during the wars that marked its close, was without doubt the really decisive factor in the struggle against France for the supremacy in India.

left it, was immeasurably stronger than it had ever been before.

Hastings' real genius, however, inclined rather to the arts of peace than of war. Organisation was his special talent; and there was need of it. The Company's affairs were in an inextricable tangle. Despite the immense profits which went home to the shareholders, the provincial administration was invariably in debt. The collection of the *révenues* was left to native agents who did their best to swindle both their employers and the peasants. There was no regular machinery for the settling of disputes, no proper law-courts, no police. All this Hastings set himself to remedy. He divided up Bengal into administrative districts. He instituted a force to maintain order. He set up a court in Calcutta where natives could be tried under a code of Hindu law. He appointed English "collectors" to superintend taxation, and provided proper machinery for its assessment. In short, he did so much to purify and regulate the Indian Civil Service that he became the object of an almost extravagant veneration and esteem. He was regarded in Bengal much as the Romans regarded Julius Cæsar; and the obsequious natives, it is said, actually raised a temple in his honour, and for long years after cherished the memory of the Sahib Warren Hostein, not so much as a hero as a god. Very different was the welcome which awaited him in England, when in 1785 he laid his burden down. Francis was lying in wait for him; and Edmund Burke, the great Whig orator, took up the task of exposing his misdeeds. His more high-handed acts were closely scrutinised. There was the hanging of Nuncomar. There was the extermination of the Rohilla tribesmen. More notorious still perhaps was his treatment of the two princesses of Oude, known as the Munny Begums. These two disreputable old ladies had appropriated enormous treasure from the Vizier's public chest, and, when they proceeded further to intrigue with his opponents, Hastings had clapped them in prison and compelled them to disgorge. The whole matter was grossly exaggerated. Tales

were spread concerning the hideous tortures inflicted upon the Begums' inoffensive lackeys. And the upshot was that the retiring Governor-General was impeached for his misdemeanours before the House of Lords,¹ In London, the trial was the sensation of the century; and Macaulay has described in his own inimitable manner the scene in the Great Hall at Westminster, where the Court of Justice sat—the peers in their robes and ermine, the scarlet hangings on the walls, the galleries crowded with the élite of town society, the high-flown eloquence of the accuser, the emotions of the fashionable audience, the fluttered handkerchiefs, the smelling-salts, the hysteria, and the sobs. The city buzzed with excitement; but, before the trial was half over, the public interest had had time to cool. For seven mortal years the trial dragged out its tedious length; then, when everyone had ceased to care about the issue, Hastings was acquitted and retired into private life. Over twenty years later he was summoned to attend at Westminster for a further enquiry. Men's ideas had been sifted out during the interval; and, when he departed, the House rose spontaneously to its feet. It was a conclusive verdict; and, as by this testimony of contemporary opinion, so before the bar of history the character of Hastings stands cleared.

The faulty constitution which had so much hampered Hastings in his office was revised in the very year of his return. This new India Bill of 1785, passed by the younger Pitt, corrected North's mistake; and henceforth the Governor-General was empowered, if need be, to override his colleagues on the Council. By the same Act, however, an even more important principle was introduced, which went half way at least to bringing India under the direct authority of Parliament. A "Board of Control," consisting of six Government nominees, was established in London and was entrusted with the general supervision of our Indian policy. The leading posts in the service were

¹ Whether or no injustice was done to Hastings, his trial was most certainly a salutary warning against extortion and misgovernment in the future.

filled at its discretion, generally by men of high title or distinction; while the Company's function was for the future confined to the detailed administration on the spot. In other words, the Company governed India no longer in its own absolute right, but, as it were, on sufferance and as the British Crown's trustee. With this change, as it so happened, the history of our occupation entered a new phase. The period of consolidation was now over, and the forward march of conquest was about to be resumed. From '93 and onwards we were again at war with France, and the French had not by any means abandoned hope of recovering India for themselves. They sent agents to stir up native princes against us and officers to drill the native princes' troops. History repeats itself, and from their antagonism, just as in the days of Clive, we first suffered grievous peril, then reaped a rich harvest in fresh annexations. The impulse to our advance came in the last years of the century. Sultan Tippoo, now ruler of Mysore in Hyder Ali's place, was already intriguing with Napoleon's emissaries, when, in 1798, there came out to Calcutta that great fighting Governor, the Marquis Wellesley, who, in the next few years' campaigning, more than trebled the total area of British occupation. First, he sent an army south to defeat Tipoo, broke up his dominions, and annexed the greater portion of Mysore. Next he turned north, and by diplomacy induced the Vizier of Oude to cede us a large tract of country between the Ganges and the Jumna, as well as the fertile province of Rohilcund. Lastly, he turned to Central India and bearded the Mahrattas in their den. Scindia, their chieftain, had a formidable army, trained under the supervision of French officers. But the Marquis's younger brother, then known as Colonel Arthur Wellesley, but one day to be the Duke of Wellington, caught the Mahratta forces at Assaye and beat them utterly. The victory gave us the supremacy of Central India and a large portion of territory to boot. Thus, when the Marquis returned home in 1805, our dominions were almost continuous from north to south. When the Napoleonic

wars were over, a new governor, the Marquis of Hastings, gave the Mahratta hordes their *coup de grâce*. Henceforward, such troubles as disturbed our rule came not from within the peninsula itself, but from the wild hill-tribes beyond the Himalayan frontier. Thus, after seventy years' fighting, the country was incontestably our own, and India looked for its orders not, as in the old days, to the palace of the great Mogul in the ancient capital of Delhi, but to the "Government House," recently erected in the Englishmen's quarter at Calcutta.

CHAPTER XI

ENGLAND AT HOME

I

SOLDIERING and sailing are not by any means the only side of life; nor is history made exclusively on battle-fields; and, although great foreign wars had filled the middle of the eighteenth century and were again to disturb its latter end, yet, in the interval of comparative tranquillity between them, it is well to consider for a moment how England fared at home. The period, at first sight, appears devoid of interest or of character. Politics were as dull as they were dirty. Ministry followed Ministry without attempt at either novel legislation or beneficial change. A sort of lethargy or stupor seemed to possess men's minds; and after the stir and conflict of the preceding century progress came suddenly to a standstill. It was as though Cromwell and his followers had lived in vain. The young flower of liberty, after a quick and too violent growth, had drooped and faded. The Royalist Restoration had come to nip its root, and democracy was paralysed at the very birth. Parliament, which had fought so hard to destroy tyranny, had itself become a tyrant; only now there were several hundred autocrats instead of one. England, truth to tell, had fallen, as in the old feudal times, under a narrow gang of selfish oligarchs. According as its so-called representatives at Westminster might call the tune, so the obsequious people danced; and how those "representatives" were chosen, we have already shown. The

vast majority of citizens had no part nor lot in their election. The rare man who had a vote could easily be bought or bullied; and by fair means or foul the aristocracy had established a firm title to call the Government their own. Whether these gentlemen were Whigs or Tories made little difference now. The Whigs had originally been composed of business men and merchants; but, as the merchants became rich and business prospered, they bought themselves estates and settled down to the sedate and cautious habits of the landed gentleman. Such a class is naturally conservative by interest and tradition. It pays them to let a condition of affairs continue which, in the past, has suited them so well; and we can, therefore, hardly wonder that the eighteenth century stagnated and stood still. Few saw the need for change, and fewer still desired it. Ideals and consciences were put soundly to sleep, and men were too preoccupied with other things to care to wake them. Wealth and the growing influx of foreign luxury bade fair to ruin the English character itself.

Even religion was at a low ebb—the lowest perhaps since the Reformation. Parsons were content to preach their dry sermons of a Sunday and follow the hounds in the week; and the bishops were for the most part too self-satisfied to seek improvement. The general apathy is the more clearly revealed by the sudden and genuine enthusiasm which flared up in the Wesleyan movement. In 1739 John Wesley built his first chapel; and from that year on, with the aid of his brother Charles and his friend Whitefield, he carried on a series of triumphant campaigns of open-air preaching and widespread conversions. His success was greatest in the southwest, notably among the miners of Cornwall; and, though he had his following even in fashionable society, the sect of Methodists, which he founded, drew mainly for support upon the shopkeeper or working class. He remained himself a member of the established church—but before his death he was ordaining ministers, and the movement was destined to become the strongest and the best organised of the Nonconformist societies. Opposition to his work was nevertheless considerable. The fervour of his

beliefs suited ill this common-sense age. His denunciations of a sinful world, his vehement calls of repentance, the suddenness of his "conversions" and the ecstasy of his hymn singings, all shocked a generation which looked askance at enthusiasm and mistook spirituality for hypocrisy. Religion which went beyond a code of decent ethics was scarcely considered good form.

Yet we may easily fall into the error of painting the eighteenth century too black. A generation which has lived through three great wars and (what is more) has emerged from two, at least, with victory and credit, could not be wholly decadent or nerveless. The aristocracy of Hanoverian times had many faults. Yet chief, perhaps, among these was their astounding ignorance that any faults existed. Look at the portrait of an eighteenth-century magnate as Reynolds or Gainsborough has painted him. That smooth unwrinkled forehead seems to bespeak an honest heart and easy conscience. The rosy well-filled cheeks, bold chin, and handsome mouth are not the features of a debauchee;¹ yet we may wager that he took his pint of port as regular as clock-work and, on occasions, ended the festive evening underneath the table. If his habits of life were loose, he was clearly not ashamed of them: his self-satisfied expression tells as much. His composure, truth to tell, was, in part at least, the secret of his strength. He never worried. If things went wrong with the Navy or the Army, he would work off his spleen in an outburst of abuse against the Minister in charge, then take a pinch of snuff and make a tour around his garden to count the peaches on the stable wall. His estates (and the peasantry who worked thereon) he managed with some sense of responsibility and pride, left them, as a rule, much better than he found them and (were he a man of enterprise) improved by sound experiments in scientific farming. He served the community as Justice of the

¹Portraits are an invaluable sidelight upon history. A remarkable difference may be noted between the anxious, even wistful faces of Cromwell or other seventeenth-century Puritans and the smug contented features of the eighteenth-century aristocrat. Even the bishops and divines of this epoch look more like prosperous grocers than men of deep religious feeling or true spiritual zeal.

Peace and, perhaps, as Sheriff of his county. He assisted in administering the doles provided for the poor. He attended the Quarter Sessions, where he punished poachers and composed the quarrels of the local farmers. He saw to the up-keep of the high-roads; often he actually improved them (and much they needed it, being notoriously the worst in Western Europe). At his best he took the lead in a more progressive fashion and introduced important innovations; the Duke of Bridgewater, for instance, was a genuine pioneer in the construction of canals, and a great thirty-two mile waterway connecting Liverpool and Manchester still bears his name. The English aristocrat, in short, was a despot, but an indispensable despot. In a hundred different ways the welfare of the parish and the county depended on his zeal and his discretion; and, on the whole, he did not often fail them. His duties, like his pleasures, he accepted with amiable composure, performing his tasks with cheerful energy and patient tact, smiling his way through life, and, when death took him in a green old age, receiving on his tomb-stone (where you may see it to this day) a fulsome catalogue of virtues, accomplishments, and graces which none doubted to be an unimpeachable certificate to Heaven. Nor need we question that the country hamlet over which he ruled supreme was in many ways a far happier, healthier, and more contented home than the grimy, insanitary, and overcrowded manufacturing cities to which since those days so many of the villagers have been transferred.

II

The Age of George III was (for the comfortable at least) a very pleasant age to live in. Then, if ever, the ruling class were happy and at ease. They had not many fears, few doubts, and no remorse. The anxieties and agonies of war scarcely touched their inner life. They took but little note whether colonies seceded or Irish peasants starved. Still less did they observe that here in very England a thing

was happening which would one day undermine their own position and disturb, past remedy, the even tenor of their ways. The long age of semi-feudal, old-fashioned agricultural life was passing. The age of steam, iron, and coal was coming into sight—the Industrial Revolution was at hand.

Up till the middle of the eighteenth century manufacture, though naturally increasing step by step with trade, was still a very primitive affair. Most work was done by hand. All metal was forged, shirts sewn, and foot-wear stitched by the physical labour of blacksmiths, seamstresses, and cobblers. Machinery, of a sort, was used, of course, for looms and flour-mills and such-like simple processes; but driving-power, if it were needed, could as yet only be borrowed from wind or running water. Men's wits, however, were now busily at work to discover new and more serviceable devices. It was an age of experiment. Even in agriculture, the most conservative of all arts, new ideas were being tried. Large landowners made trial of all sorts of schemes, artificial manures, the rotation of crops, and the scientific breeding of cattle, with the result that, not merely was the productivity of the soil very considerably increased, but also the quality of stock so much improved that an average beast at the end of the century weighed (so they say) just over twice as much as an average beast at the beginning. The experiments and inventions with which we are now concerned had, however, a very different issue; nor were they the work of influential and important persons. Near Blackburn in Lancashire there lived a certain poor, unknown, ill-educated man, by name James Hargreave. Spinning was his trade; and the spinning-wheel then universally employed, by Hargreave no less than by everybody else, was worked by motions of the hand and foot. Above the wheel was fixed a wad of raw cotton, flax, or wool; and from this, when the wheel was set in motion, a simple mechanism drew out a fine-spun thread and wound it neatly round a horizontal reel or so-called "spindle". One day the spinning-wheel in Hargreave's

house was accidentally upset. The wheel, however, continued to revolve on its side upon the floor, and the spindle, now standing upright, continued automatically to wind the thread. At this sight Hargreave was struck by a sudden inspiration. Why, he asked himself, should not *half-a dozen spindles* thus be kept simultaneously in motion by the revolutions of a *single wheel*? He set to work at once and constructed, on this basis, a machine which he called the "spinning-jenny". In this a row of eight spindles, set upright side by side, were kept revolving by a wheel turned with a windlass. The result was a great triumph. Where one man previously could spin but a single thread, he was now able, by turning at the windlass, to spin eight. The invention was not popular with Hargreave's fellow-workmen, and, fearing the competition of this formidable rival, they broke up his machine. For all that, the discovery was bound to win its way. It had shown how the output of one individual's labour could be multiplied eight-fold. What limit could there be to such an increase? Given the necessary power to drive them, eighty, eight hundred, or eight thousand spindles might be kept at work mechanically winding thread. To find the driving-power was the next needful step. Now, about the same time as Hargreave made his "jenny," a certain inventive young barber of Bolton, Richard Arkwright by name, was also conducting experiments on different lines. In 1769 he had hit on the idea of passing the spun thread through two pairs of close-pressed rollers, the second pair of which revolved so much more quickly than the first that they stretched out the thread like an elastic and drew it through more delicate and fine. At first he employed horses to supply the driving-power for his machine; but in 1771 he went one better and set up a water-wheel to serve this purpose. Nothing remained now but to combine the two inventions, and this was done by another Bolton man named Samuel Crompton. The rollers and the water-power he took from Arkwright's mill, the multiplication of the spindles from the Hargreave "jenny". Putting them both together he constructed a

machine which, springing as it did from a "cross" between two diverse parents, was nicknamed Crompton's "mule". The "mule" led quickly, of course, to an enormous increase of production; and little by little the invention was improved and perfected, until to-day as many as twelve thousand spindles can be kept simultaneously in motion with only a single human being there to mind them.

There remained, however, a second problem of a different sort. The "mule" might spin the thread, but how to weave it? Hand-loom was, of course, half as old as time itself. (Did not Penelope work one in Ithaca while Ulysses was from home?) But weaving on these was at best a toilsome process. Three separate manual processes were at the very least involved. First, the shuttle, threaded with the woof, had to be passed from hand to hand between the outstretched warps; secondly, the woof tightly combed into position by a toothed rod or "reed"; thirdly, the position of the warps reversed by a treadle, and the passing of the shuttle then repeated. These three movements were simple enough in themselves, but, so long as they were performed by hand alone, the manufacture of cloth was necessarily slow. In the early eighties, however, a certain clergyman of Leicestershire, the Reverend Edmund Cartwright, procured the services of the local blacksmith and the village carpenter, and had a model loom constructed in which these threefold movements were performed by mechanical means. Springs threw the shuttle from side to side and back again. The "reed" automatically descended, packed home the woof, and returned into its place, and finally a simple gear sufficed to interchange the position of the warps. Cartwright's loom, like Hargreave's jenny, was for a long time unpopular among the hand-weavers, and one factory he built at Manchester was burnt to the ground by these indignant rivals. The power-loom, however, was too productive an invention to be allowed to drop. It was soon brought nearer to perfection. The first clumsy model took two strong men to work it. But the motive power of water was presently employed, and, before the century was over, a

new secret had been discovered, and a new force summoned into play—the Steam Engine.

The idea of using steam as motive power was, by now, no special novelty, but a satisfactory method of applying it had not as yet been found, and it remained a toy till the arrival of James Watt. Watt was a Scotsman, son of a Greenock merchant, and by reason of ill-health, from which he suffered, he turned to the making of geometrical instruments. Mechanics interested him; he kept his eyes wide open, and, if tradition speaks the truth, his first idea of the potentialities of steam was drawn from the observation of the behaviour of a kettle-lid. However that may be, he set to work upon experiments, and in 1764—three years later than the invention of the jenny—he produced a model steam-engine which worked. The practical employment of this new discovery was at first confined to purely stationary functions, and was not applied to locomotion proper. Steam-driven pumps were first employed, and in time, as we have hinted, the steam-engine supplanted water-power for turning spinning-wheels and looms. The further step, however, was not long delayed, and before the end of the century a small paddle-boat was plying at the speed of seven knots on a Dumfries-shire loch. Sea-going steamers followed a little later, and by the first year of Queen Victoria's reign the screw had been invented and the Atlantic crossed. During the same interval the locomotive engine was also coming in. Small trains of trucks were run on rails at the pit-head of the mines; but not till the year 1829 was the idea of railroad transport on a larger scale put definitely into practice. In that year a competition was held between four rival engines, and in this the "Rocket," manufactured by George Stephenson, came out an easy winner. For the Rocket could travel at 35 miles an hour and pull a train of carriages along with it. In the following year a line was laid down connecting Liverpool and Manchester. Its practical utility was proved, and the triumph of the railway was secure.

In eighteenth-century days, however, of which we are now speaking, such wonderful developments were scarcely

dreamt of. The time was not yet ripe. For all that industry was moving fast. The mechanical inventions for spinning and for weaving produced in this country a deep and striking change. They gave an enormous impetus to trade and manufacture. The possibility of producing cloths and fabrics was increased a hundredfold. There were plenty of enterprising folk in England, who, seeing large profits to be got out of the business, hastened to install the necessary machines, and, more important still, there was now a ready market for the goods. Not merely did the growing and more prosperous population require the manufacture of more clothes at home, but the opening up of commerce with our tropical possessions led also to a new demand for cotton fabrics. Up till this time, wool had remained the popular material, and cotton was still regarded as a dangerous interloper, likely, if much encouraged, to supplant or cripple our treasured home industry in wool. Till 1770, therefore, the authorities had frowned upon its importation, and to make a fabric more than half of cotton was actually prohibited by law. Now, however, the opportunity was too rich and dazzling to be for long refused. These hampering restrictions were gradually withdrawn. Hundreds of English cotton mills were started in the north, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century America was sending us millions of pounds of cotton every year.

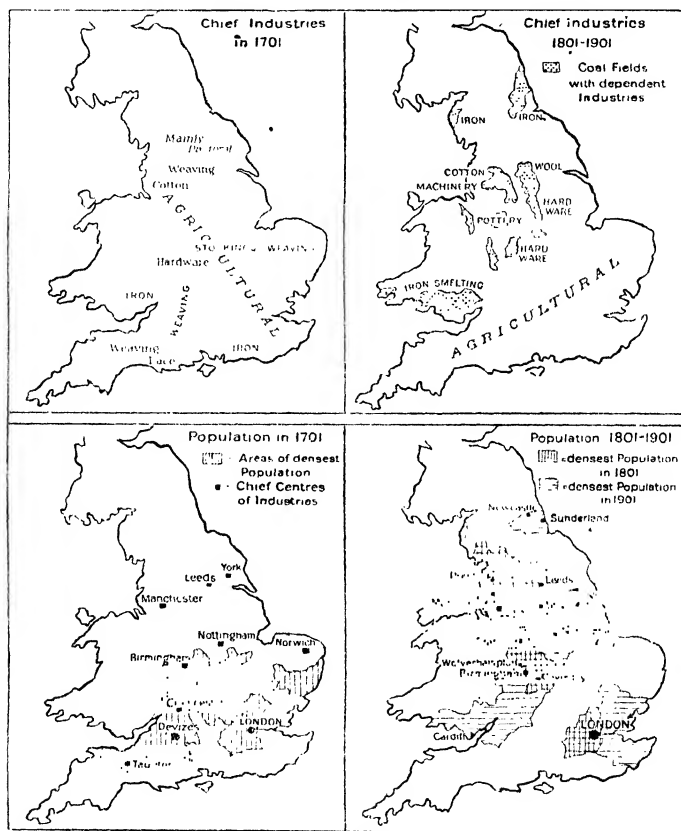
Such a speeding up in one or two spheres of manufacture could not of course take place without a very profound effect on many others, and a few inventions, apparently so trivial in themselves, have availed to alter the whole character of English industry. The employment of steam-driven machinery, to start with, involved in itself two necessary things—iron to make the machinery and coal to work it. Iron-mining and coal-mining were neither of them new. In the seventeenth century Newcastle coal could be procured at nineteen shillings a ton. Iron had been smelted with charcoal since at least the middle ages, and whole forests had been actually destroyed in providing fuel for this purpose. But the very inventions which called forth the

need for coal and iron in greater quantities were also largely instrumental in making them, at the same time, more easily procurable. Watt's steam-engine was used for pumping water out of mines, as well as for hauling the material to the surface. New processes of smelting ore had lately been discovered, and soon great furnaces were discharging their streams of molten metal, fed by the fuel which engines manufactured from their product helped to win. Thus a vast network of industries, each mutually dependent on the other, began to cover the surface of the land. The mechanical devices first used for making fabrics were applied to other forms of manufacture, of pins and nails, of cutlery and scissors, and all the thousand-and-one articles which are now in every-day requirement. England, hitherto in the main an agricultural country, was thereby led to convert her energies into a new direction. The change, of course, took time, but the change could scarcely have been more complete. In 1770 one quarter of our total population were engaged upon the land. That proportion has now dwindled to one twenty-fifth, and the whole vast surplus of our increased numbers has been diverted into the thriving centres of our manufactures. The normal Englishman, in short, has ceased to be a ploughman or a shepherd. He has become a miner, engineer, or factory hand. That is the true meaning of the somewhat bewildering and perhaps misleading phrase, the "Industrial Revolution".

III.

Big changes, as we have said, take time, but the Industrial Revolution, as its name declares, brought about changes which, however gradual, were of enormous consequence in the history of the English people. Three in particular fall to be noted here. In the first place, it was to touch the personal habits of the labouring classes very nearly, altering the whole character and method of their work. Throughout mediæval times, and almost to the close of the seventeenth century, industry had been carried on almost entirely

in small groups, a master gathering round him a band of craftsmen and apprentices who were all employed together in the friendly co-operation of a common workshop. There



EFFECTS OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION.

were no large factories, such as there are to-day, employing many hundred or many thousand hands. With the beginning of the eighteenth century, however, trade took, as we have seen, a big leap forward, and, as the demand for

manufactured articles increased, and masters desired to get these articles produced upon a larger scale, a new system came into fashion. Instead of collecting his men into one central workshop, the employer preferred now to distribute the materials and let the men take it away to work up into articles at home. Under this system he was able to employ perhaps, hundreds of persons, where before he had only been able to employ a dozen—to employ, too, women and children as well as full-grown men. Whole families engaged upon the work in their own cottage; there would be a spinning wheel perhaps for every member, or each would take a shift upon the household loom, and, when the tale of cloth or yarn had been completed, a collector would come round among the scattered villages and carry the manufactured goods away to the warehouse or the market. This home-work or “domestic” system, as it has come to be called, was increasingly common in the first half of the eighteenth century; it survived in many trades long after the Industrial Revolution had begun, and in some it lingers on even to this day. But it is obvious enough that, once machinery was introduced, the domestic system was no longer adequate. A power-loom could not be set up in every cottage, and, even were this possible, the distribution of the fuel would be an incalculable labour. Since, therefore, the machinery could not go to the people, the people had to go to the machines, and the result of this necessity has been the factory, in which a hundred or maybe to-day a thousand men and women congregate, spending their long day in the manipulation of machines, and returning only at nightfall to their homes. Whether the Factory System is worse or better than the Domestic System we cannot here discuss: both have their faults, and the evil consequences of the factories at least are with us still. More important to be noted here is the second result of the Industrial Revolution, which springs directly from the first.

Now, just as the people were compelled to congregate at the new factories or work-centres, so it was equally inevitable that these new factories should themselves be

concentrated in certain definite areas. Mines can only be dug where there is iron or coal to dig for. Machinery is more practicable to run where fuel can be easily supplied. The districts, therefore, which produced either coal or iron soon drew to themselves a new population of workers, and these folk, naturally desirous to live as near as might be to their work, crowded close together in their fresh quarters. As a result new towns sprang up like mushrooms, and very miserable unwholesome towns they mostly were, street after street and row after row of uniform jerry-built houses without beauty, comfort, cleanliness, or even adequate accommodation, groups of tall brick-built chimneys belching forth great columns of foul smoke, blast-furnaces roaring to the heavens and turning mid-night into garish day, a countryside soot-sodden, starved of greenery, an offence to God and an injury to man. It is not too much to say that the seeds of half our modern problems—of housing, ill-health, and working-class unrest—were sown during these years. Slums are the second consequence of the Industrial Revolution.

So coal and iron then acted like a magnet. In days when no railways yet existed the difficulties of transport were almost unsurmountable, and even spinners and weavers were inevitably attracted to their neighbourhood. Now, as the map will show, the districts in which coal and iron are to be found and where the new towns, therefore, cluster thickest, lie mainly in the north and the north-west. The third consequence of the Industrial Revolution then was this: the population of England began to shift, not merely from the country to the towns, but from the south and east into the north and west. This was a change indeed. Hitherto, throughout the history of the nation, the North had been a backwater—desolate, thinly peopled, pastoral in the main, and invariably a hundred years behind the times. The North had been slow to accept the Reformation, as was shown by the Pilgrimage of Grace. It clung to the cause of the Stuarts till at Marston Moor the Parliament recovered it, and it remained still the chief stronghold of the landed

aristocracy's prestige. The South, on the other hand, had always been progressive. London and the commercial towns of the Channel coast had supported Simon de Montfort in his day, and so first raised the banner of liberty and justice. As time went on, towns had grown strong and numerous elsewhere, and the woollen industry had been established both in East Anglia, where exiled Flemings settled, and also round about the Cotswold country, where the largest sheep farms lay, and where many old-fashioned water-driven power-mills may, even now, be seen. Meanwhile in Lancashire and Yorkshire the foundations of industry were also laid, but as yet on a small scale. These various new craft-centres had carried on the free progressive spirit of the earlier towns-folk. Thus, as we have seen, there was strong backing in East Anglia for the Parliamentary cause. Allies too were found in Gloucester and in the few towns existing in the north. So things had stood till the Industrial Revolution came and shifted the balance once for all. The population was drawn into the north, and the south was left half-empty and wholly asleep. Consider many market-towns of south and central England, once famous and thriving in their day, which are now no more than picturesque survivals of those far forgotten times. The Industrial Revolution has cast a spell about them under which they have fallen asleep; their prosperous energy has subsided; their markets are empty; grass grows in their streets, weeds on their walls. What they once stood for—vigour, independence, liberty and progress—must now be sought elsewhere, in the noisy, bustling, smoke-begrimed cities of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and the north-west Midlands.

It is a common boast beyond the Mersey that what Lancashire is thinking to-day England will think to-morrow; and there is truth in it. The big towns now, as always, lead the way. So the results of the great change were not industrial merely, but political as well; and the so-called Revolution which brought them into being was paving the way also for other and more hazardous developments. For the independent spirit of the citizens of these great towns was

sharpened and embittered by the miserable conditions under which they lived, and, whatever the rich and comfortable might think, they at least were not content to let things bide. The day of reckoning could not forever be postponed. It was not perhaps the aristocracy of England who had called the great towns into being; but the aristocracy were the self-appointed stewards of the state's welfare, and the time was soon to come when these sedate and self-satisfied gentry would be called to give account of their long stewardship, and when the hard-driven labourers of the towns would demand for themselves also a share in the government of England. The movement towards Democracy was slow and painful. It was fully half-a-century before the first great advance was made, and the Reform Bill of 1832 extended to a far wider circle of the people a share in the election of its representatives. It is not perhaps until the present day that the working classes have awaked altogether to the nature of their power and begun to take the country's government more and more into their hands. Yet in history it is often the first steps which count the most: and the first steps were really taken when Hargreave made his jenny and Watt's steam engine was set up at a pit-head. The Industrial Revolution was the herald and forerunner of that great revolt whereby the working-class has won its rights, and triumphed over the strong forces of a lingering semi-feudal aristocracy. Happily for England, that revolt has been a gradual process—peaceful, constitutional, restrained, and (with but very few exceptions) marred neither by bloody conflict nor by reckless haste. Very different was the destiny of our near neighbour France. There the overthrow of feudal tyranny came not by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, but with the sudden noise and fury of a tempest, setting class against class in murderous death-grapple, and involving the rest of Europe in the awful conflagration of Napoleon's wars. That day was not now far distant; and, while our own Industrial Revolution was still in its first infancy, the French Revolution burst forth a full-grown terror from the womb of startled Time.

CHAPTER XII

ENGLAND AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

EVEN the worst catastrophes may have their good effect; and the tragic blunder of George III's supremacy was not without its benefit. It at least taught the Whigs a salutary lesson. Seeing the power of the crown once more predominant in English politics, and themselves driven out of office, they remembered in adversity the principles which they had forgotten in their prime. The fundamental idea of the great party's founders when they drove James II into exile and set William of Orange on the throne had been the subordination of the King to Parliament. A return to that old policy of 1689 was therefore not unnatural in the Whig enemies of George III; and we find them in 1780 putting forward the motion long remembered for its inimitable pertness, that the "Crown's influence has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished". Nor was this all; for, along with the old Whig doctrine of resisting tyranny in all its forms, there was also revived the complementary doctrine of championing liberty in all its forms. Under a King like George such a championship was certainly most needed; and during the American controversy these "Old Whigs," as they called themselves, performed undoubted service in arguing the case for the colonials. When, however, it came to war, they spoiled it all by persisting in their factious opposition. Charles Fox, their most masterly debater, made no secret of his hope that the colonists would win. Edmund Burke was little better; and the whole party made themselves worse than ridiculous by adopting as their colours

the "buff and blue" worn by the rebel army. The fact is that they badly overdid their part, and in their perpetual whine about the colonials' "liberties" and "rights" the Old Whigs were guilty not merely of some hypocrisy, but of personal spite into the bargain. There was a considerable flavour of "sour grapes" in their new attitude; and they were opposed to Lord North's policy much less because they were honestly convinced of its injustice than because they were out of office and he was in. The crowning proof of their insincerity came in 1783, when, even before the Treaty of Versailles was signed, Fox actually struck up an alliance with his old arch-enemy and entered a Coalition government as the *colleague of Lord North*. From this, if from nothing else, it was manifest to all that the Old Whigs' regeneration was at best skin-deep. Notwithstanding much fine talk about their principles, their heart was as yet unchanged; and the canker of intrigue and party malice which had so long been their bane was their bane still. Happily, however, all Whigs were not "Old Whigs". There was another party, the followers of Chatham, who were of a different type. "New Whigs" they called themselves, and their most brilliant spokesman was now Chatham's son. William Pitt the younger was a mere boy of twenty-four when, in '83, the infamous Coalition between Fox and North was formed; but he was wise beyond his years, a great scholar in the Classics, a brilliant conversationalist, in politics and debate an infant prodigy—"not a chip of the old block, but the old block itself," as Burke admiringly remarked. But, more than all this, the one rooted determination which possessed the young man's mind was to have done with the accumulated filth of party politics and, if the power were ever his, to sweep it clean away. When, therefore, in the last days of '83 the King dismissed Fox and North in high displeasure, and offered the vacant ministry to William Pitt, the offer was accepted; and the task was then taken up which was not to be laid down till seventeen long years had passed away.

It would be rash to say that George liked Pitt much

better than his father : he probably disliked him ; but Fox, the only possible alternative, he certainly disliked much more, and he gladly kept Pitt in to keep Fox out. This fact gave Pitt his chance. He was a loyal enough minister to George, but he knew his own mind and his own strength too well to truckle to His Majesty's dictation. And, indeed, from '88 onwards His Majesty ceased to be in a position to dictate. In that year, a brain attack—the first of many—drove George for the time being off his head ; and thenceforward Pitt suffered little interference from that quarter. More important therefore than his relations to the King were the young minister's relations to Parliament itself. As one who had supplanted them in the office which they coveted, he naturally met with the most bitter opposition from the "Old Whig" party. Their malice, however, overshoot the mark ; and by their nagging tactics they brought more discredit to themselves than they did harm to Pitt. The country saw him to be a better man than his opponents, and backed him heartily, delighting to honour the son of their old favourite and the apostle of a cleaner public life. After a triumphant general election in '84, Pitt commanded a mixed majority, drawn from either side the house, "New" Whigs and "King's Friend" Tories. Both sections learnt from their leader the lesson which neither had yet mastered, of reconciling the cause of English liberty and progress with allegiance to the King. His example taught them to set the country's interest above party claims ; and, in contrast to the "Old" Whigs' unpatriotic agitations, their staunch defence of Crown and Constitution gave them eventually the reputation of being at heart a Tory government. Pitt's principles, upon the other hand, were first and foremost Whig, the genuine Whig principles, that is, and not the false. Like every true seeker after liberty and progress, he stood for political reform, financial economy, and—so long as this was possible—for peace abroad. Reform lay perhaps nearest to his heart. Himself so wholesomely independent of all species of corruption, he desired to rescue political power from many corrupt agencies which gripped it. The

old system of small country boroughs, controlled by the purse or influence of some great magnate, had become the more ridiculous and out of place since the growth of the new towns; and, in order to give to the masses a more generous share in the country's government, Pitt produced in '85 an important measure for redistributing the Parliamentary seats. But the time was not yet ripe. The forces opposed to such a change were still too strong and numerous, Pitt's Bill was quashed, and his ideal of political reform was not to take effect till nearly another half-century had passed. In finance he was more successful. The burden of debt, a result of the late wars, was overwhelming, and the annual revenues were positively less than the national expenses. Pitt saw, however, as Walpole had seen too, that high taxes, being an obstacle to trade, are not the only way, and not the best way, of increasing revenues. He therefore lowered the scale of duties upon various imports, until smuggling ceased to pay; and the result was that he was able to reduce the National Debt by ten millions in eight years; his annual budget began to show a surplus instead of a deficit; and the trade of the country boomed. Like Walpole in this too, though most unlike his father, Pitt was essentially a man of peace. It was only the accident of an unforeseen catastrophe which drove him against all his natural impulses to war, and to a war which killed him. He even shut his eyes, a'most wilfully it seems, to the approaching danger, and on the very eve of the great struggle he declared, with an optimism which it is not easy to excuse, that "never had there been a time when Great Britain could more confidently look forward to fifteen years of peace".

For such lack of foresight, however, Pitt abundantly atoned by the magnificent courage with which he faced the storm; and, when that storm fell, it was everything to us that a pilot of such valuable experience and such noble character was standing at the helm. For the French Revolution put England to the test, as nothing had ever tested her before. Apart from the peril of the war itself,

the political upheaval which took place across the Channel found naturally an echo on these shores. The example of democracy is contagious; and the minds of Englishmen of every class were deeply stirred, some by new aspirations, others by new fears. What might have happened if Lord North had been Prime Minister, or George the Third been sane, we can but guess; but at least there is no doubt that in its influence on our own political development—our ideals of democracy and liberty and progress—the French Revolution was “the most important event in English History”; and, since that is so, it will be worth while here to examine its sources and its course in considerable detail.

II

Nations, they say, always get the government that they deserve. But, if the political development of France had been somewhat slow and backward, it was not altogether perhaps the people's fault. Theirs was a big country, and its very size had been an obstacle to unity and progress; so that, long after our own more compact and manageable kingdom had been firmly knit together under the strong rule of a central monarchy, France had remained a loosely bound association of semi-independent feudal dukedoms. It was not, in fact, until the reign of Louis XI (when the Wars of the Roses were taking place in England) that France could properly be called one State. The growth of a true national feeling had in consequence been slow, and French kings had been able to play the tyrant with corresponding ease. So, whereas in England the Tudors had won their power by courting popular support and the Stuarts had lost theirs by despising it, Louis XIV had succeeded in combining the monarchical authority of a Tudor with the despotic methods of a Stuart. He and his successors were thus able to ride rough-shod over their subjects' feelings, to tax their pockets, to dictate their creed, and to scoff at all suggestion of constitutional compromise, until the day of reckoning came when their mistake

would be discovered and—it would be too late. Much perhaps for the same reason, the French aristocracy had equally retained a full measure of all their old exclusiveness and feudal power. In money-making England the classes had intermingled; and it was easy now for a successful London merchant to become a peer. In France, on the other hand, the upper class were still to such a degree a separate caste, that an upstart bourgeois was scarcely admitted to the ranks of their society; and by a recent law men were even excluded from taking a commission in the army unless noble born. As landlords, the nobles were at best indifferent and at worst cruel task-masters, keeping a jealous grip over the tenants round their châteaux and exacting their feudal dues of rent and service, as in the bad old mediæval times. In short, the nobility held jealously aloof; and, as on the day of Crecy when the French knights rode down their archers like dirt under their feet, so now the rift continued between high and low, and with every year grew wider. France groaned under the burden of its antiquated system; yet scarcely an echo of the rising discontent reached to the gay palace at Versailles, where the giddy young Austrian bride of Louis Seize led on the reckless riot of wanton junketing at feast and gaming-table, masquerade and carnival, amid a host of powdered lords and painted ladies, polished in manner, exquisite in dress, but as utterly unmoved by their own country's troubles as the foreign queen herself. Thus between the aristocratic idlers of the *château* or the court and the toiling multitudes of workshop, field, or counter, there was now fixed a gulf no longer to be bridged; and the result was that in the coming Revolution the townsfolk of the middle and the craftsmen or peasants of the lower class were to make common cause against the common foe. In England it had been otherwise. The fourteenth century peasants had struck their blow at feudal tyranny without much assistance from the towns; and two centuries later the townsfolk in their turn had fought and overthrown King Charles without much assistance from the rustic

labourer. But the French Revolution proved to be, as it were, the Peasants' Rising and the Puritan Rebellion joined in one. Grievances long suppressed in town and country alike found here an equal outlet and a class-bitterness fostered by many centuries of misrule, led on at last to frantic excesses of violence and revenge.

Revolutions, as Europe has been learning within recent years, are bred not in men's brains, but in their stomachs. It was the British blockade that dethroned the Kaiser Wilhelm; and Bolshevism was the product of starving Russian towns. Theorists, in fact, may agitate in vain among the prosperous and well-fed, and men feel little desire for self-government or the ballot box until their store-cupboard at home is empty. To this rule the French Revolution was no exception. Grinding taxation began it. Long and exhausting wars, waged to gratify a king's or a minister's ambition, had crowded thick and fast; the national treasury was empty; and the burden fell most unfairly, not on those who could afford it best, but on those rather who could not. In England it was the rich who paid the taxes; in France it was the poor. On the top of this came a series of bad harvests. Even the tough black bread, which was the staple food of France, ran short. Then the stomach spoke. Hungry men, and women too, took desperate courses; and the spell of the crown's authority was snapped. Now came the theorist's chance. New-fangled talk of democracy was in everybody's mouth. The prophets of vague Socialism were numerous and loud. The gospel of Jean Jacques Rousseau, who had preached the equality and brotherhood of man, found millions of disciples; and the recent emancipation of the United States was an object-lesson which even the most ignorant could read. The stage stood empty; the monarchy had been overthrown; the time was ripe for a grand experiment; and France embarked on the first great national adventure into the realm of pure Democracy. It was a brief flutter, a short-lived agony. Self-government is not by any means an easy art to learn. As always happens, the masses

threatened to pass beyond control, and the demagogue, struggling to maintain a shaken influence by courting a spurious popularity, was compelled at the last to turn tyrant himself; and when he, too, failed, his place was taken by a military dictator, destined to carry France through an orgy of victory and bloodshed, to destroy for twenty years the peace of Europe, and to threaten the very liberties of the world. Strange things, indeed, are done by men in the sacred name of Freedom.

In the year 1789—it was on the fifth of May to be precise—there assembled at Versailles what we can best describe as the mediæval Parliament of France. The “States-General,” consisting of representatives from the Lords, the Clergy, and the Commons, was an institution long since established, and long since also disused. It had met in 1614 shortly before Richelieu’s day, but that had been its last appearance until now, when Louis XVI, frightened not a little by the rising tide of public disaffection, honestly desirous, though in no clear-sighted fashion, of introducing some reform, and anxious to rectify at any rate the more glaring injustices in the existing system of taxation, had determined to call it once again. Now in the States-General, as in the early English Parliaments, it was the established custom that each of the three estates of Clergy, Lords, and Commons should sit and deliberate apart. To the representatives of the Commons (whether peasants of the country or bourgeois of the towns) this was a sore handicap and grievance; for it thereby became impossible for them, though equal to the combined number of the Lords and Clergy, to make their true weight felt. When, therefore, the Assembly met in answer to the royal summons at Versailles, nothing would content the Commons’ representatives but that a joint session should be held. To this the nervous king demurred, raising legal objections and playing desperately for time. Impatient of delay, the Commons took the law into their own hands. On 17th June they met and declared that, whatever the king or his councillors might say, *they* were the “National Assembly”.

At this bold action something near akin to terror seized the court, and when three days later the Commons' representatives essayed to meet again, they were told that workmen were busy in the hall and admission was refused. Nearby, as it so happened, was an old-fashioned tennis-court, spacious, vacant and large enough for all. The Commons entered it; all stood; a motion was put; hands were raised in unanimous support, and it was there and then decreed that the Assembly should not separate until a proper constitution had been given to France. The thing was done. For a thousand years France had been ruled by a king whom no law bound; and now six hundred elected deputies had undertaken to bind him. Dumb France had found a voice.

But a voice alone was powerless to remove the mountains of obstruction which still lay across the path of true reform. The king, poor honest simpleton, meant well. Necker, his minister of finance, was doing what he could to pacify the public rage; but, fearing to go too far, Louis lacked the courage to go far enough, and others less honest than he was held him back. Still some sort of compromise was not impossible; nor were even his opponents for running to extremes. Mirabeau, the great giant among their leaders, was no hot-headed revolutionary. He desired above all things to preserve her ancient monarchy for France. Moreover, he was heavily in debt, and it was whispered among his enemies that he was in royal pay. From him and from others like him there was much fine talk indeed; but, if talk was to be all, then the preliminary thunders of the National Assembly might very well have ended in a futile bray. For France, having found a voice, still needed an arm to strike.

Meanwhile in Paris, not an hour's ride away, the doings at Versailles had been watched with grim suspense. The hot Gallic temper of the capital was dangerously explosive. There, socialists talked treason at street corners; hooligans needed but small encouragement to break the peace; and, still more ominous, a body of volunteers calling themselves

the National Guard was being organised and drilled. Only a spark was now needed to fire the magazine. On the 11th of July, news came to Paris that Necker, the finance minister on whom the people's hopes were pinned, had been dismissed. Crowds began to gather. The armourers' shops were eagerly frequented. On the 14th, a store of guns and ammunition was looted from the great military dépôt of Les Invalides; and the next step was to follow the same afternoon. Now, dominating Paris and embodying, as it seemed to the inhabitants, a symbol of all that they most hated, there stood a fortress, immensely massive, seemingly impregnable, in which for centuries past had been imprisoned the unfortunate and often innocent victims of the royal displeasure — the Bastille. Thither the mob, now freshly armed, betook themselves. The Governor lowered the drawbridge; a party ventured across; some misunderstanding occurred; a musket was let off, and the party were shot down. Then Paris went mad. Somehow—though in what manner it is difficult to guess—an entry was obtained. The rabble swarmed in, forced open the dungeons and set free the seven prisoners whom they found there, massacred the garrison, and placing their heads on pikes marched with them in procession through the streets. The Bastille itself was levelled to the ground. The news of this act of violence travelled like wildfire throughout France; and to the peasants it came as a signal to throw off the chains of their own oppressors. We should be wrong to think of the peasantry of France as the most downtrodden among nations. Great as was their poverty and grinding as was their toil, they were by no means slaves; and compared with the German peasants of that day they were well off. But, as so often in the course of Labour movements, the more they won of independence and security, the more acutely conscious they had become of the cruel wrongs which still remained. Apart from unfair taxation, their aristocratic landlords held many of them closely in their grip. The hampering restraints of feudal custom galled them at every turn; and now, when

they too came to strike their blow for freedom, their one ambition was at all costs to make a clean cut with the past. Many châteaux were looted. Some of the nobility suffered with their lives. But, wherever it was possible, the first aim of the peasants was to secure or to destroy the title deeds and other documents which gave the landlords any claim for rent or service over their tenants' plots. Like the Russian "moujiks" of the recent Revolution, all the French rustics cared for was to make the land thenceforward unconditionally their own. This done, they settled down again more or less contentedly, leaving the further course of the Revolution to the towns.

And, indeed, while such wild doings were in progress through the country-side, wilder scenes yet were passing between Paris and Versailles. The mob of the capital was very far from having quieted down; and, while their recent victory was inciting the men of Paris to fresh hopes and fresh exertions, hunger was gradually arousing a still more desperate element—the women. Shortage of bread, a result of failing crops, had long been troublesome in France. No serious remedy had been attempted. The blame was naturally, if unreasonably, laid at the door of the King's government; and the angry populace had been yet further embittered by such insults as the heartless taunt flung out of late by the reactionary Foulon: "Let the people eat grass," he had said, and the words were not forgotten. By the autumn of '89 the shortage in the capital had become acute. Long "queues" of hungry women were to be seen outside the bakers' shops; murmurs grew, and even a trifling irritation was now enough to precipitate a fresh outbreak. On 5th October news came from Versailles that a drunken party of young royalist officers had insulted the emblem of the Revolution, the tricolour cockade. This was sufficient. A horde of frenzied women, wild-eyed, with hair streaming and cutlasses in hand, set out along the high-road to Versailles. The National Guards, under the command of La Fayette, soon followed them; and next morning they broke into the palace, cut

down two sentries, and came within an ace of lynching Queen Marie Antoinette. Only one thing would pacify their fury—that the King should himself return to Paris at their head. So Louis went back to the ancient seat of his fathers. The Palace of the Tuileries was reopened to receive him; and there in the heart of Paris, its prisoner rather than its king, he remained a helpless puppet, unable any longer to control events. For Paris, partly in virtue of its possession of his person, partly because it was the very hub and centre of the political life of France, became henceforth sole master of the situation. The Revolution first and last was Paris's work. Paris was the arm which struck while the rest of France was faltering; and from Paris the smaller towns scattered throughout the country took their cue. Like most great cities, it contained two elements: first, the unlettered masses incapable of thought, the hooligans and roughs, and hungry women, with whom we may couple, though they were far more stable, the more disciplined shopkeepers and craftsmen who formed the National Guard; second, the educated men of the professions, attorneys, doctors, journalists, and what not—men who could read and think, make speeches and formulate a policy, and who were chiefly to be found in the two revolutionary societies or clubs named the Cordeliers and the Jacobins. Thus, while to the masses belonged the impetus or driving-power which was to carry the Revolution forward along its perilous path, it lay with these other men, as mouthpieces or leaders, to organise that impetus, to express in the language of their own political theories the inarticulate aspirations of the mob, and, when the popular frenzy threatened to sweep both them and the whole State to headlong ruin, to direct and to control it, if they could. Therein lay the hope for France—and the danger.

III

For just on three years after the King and Queen took up their quarters at the Tuileries, the work of re-building

up France upon a new foundation was carried forward, if not smoothly, indeed, yet with much earnest and diligent endeavour. Recent events had simplified the task. The aristocrats of the court party had abandoned resistance or argument as hopeless, and, scared by the violent course events were taking, had fled across the frontier or the Channel, thus removing the worst obstacle to a peaceful settlement, and leaving the National Assembly a clear field. That body, which had now moved to Paris with the King, was undertaking the reconstruction of New France upon very moderate lines. Much had already been done to remove the worst abuses of the old régime. Feudalism had vanished with the landlords' flight, and France had become (as she is still to-day) a country of small holders and peasant proprietors. The Church, a fellow-tyrant with the aristocracy, had been severely humbled; and the extensive property held by the bishops and religious houses had been confiscated to the State. The laws and law-courts were remodelled, and the whole country freshly organised upon a business-like system of "communes" and "departments". In short, before the National Assembly finally dissolved, its self-appointed task had been concluded. The way was prepared for a true constitutional government, with a strictly limited monarch at its head. Louis' position was not what once it had been; but it seemed at least secure. He was becoming even popular in Paris, and might, had he been wise, have lived to govern France as King George was governing England. That chance he now refused. Two influences, both of them external to himself, led him astray. In the first place, Marie Antoinette, his queen, who still exercised a fatal power over her husband's acts, was quite impenitent. She was the daughter of the great Maria Theresa, late Empress of Austria and Prussian Frederic's enemy. Her brother was even now seated on the Austrian throne, and, not unnaturally at this crisis of her fortune, Marie Antoinette turned to Vienna for aid. Secret missives passed; and soon a plot was hatched for her and her husband to quit Paris in disguise and escape across the

frontier to their Austrian friends. A coach was secretly provided by loyal agents. Post-horses were arranged along the intended route, passports prepared under false names; and on 20th June, of 1791, the royal fugitives slipped out by the Porte de Clichy and made off in the direction of the German frontier. There was at once a hue and cry. The coach lagged unaccountably upon the road; and a post-master named Drouet, guessing instinctively the route which it had taken, got to horse, pursued, and at Varennes, within a few miles of the frontier, came up with it. The post-horses which should have been in readiness were not. That delay ruined all. Drouet gave the word to the town authorities; the coach was held up; the royal party were arrested, and ignominiously conducted back to what was now certainly their prison at the Tuileries. From the day of that fatal flight, Louis and his wife were no longer king and queen in the eyes of Paris, but criminals who had confessed themselves in league with the enemies of France. And, indeed, the enemies of France were already moving. For the second influence, of which we spoke above, had been at work. The noble émigrés had been intriguing with foreign courts beyond the Rhine. Monarchs, seeing a fellow monarch in peril of his life, needed no urging; and both Austria and Prussia were eager to crush the Revolution before worse came of it. In the spring of '92, the Revolutionary Government seeing invasion to be inevitable took time by the forelock and itself declared war. With that, the Revolution entered upon a new and more terrible phase. The restraining spirit of compromise and moderation was now dead. The royalist intrigues had killed it; and Paris broke out under the strain of the new crisis with frantic deeds of bloodshed and revenge. In August the mob forced its way into the Tuileries, fought and overwhelmed the King's foreign bodyguard of Swiss, and removed the royal couple to a prison-fortress known as the Temple Tower. Meanwhile, as the German armies entered upon French soil, precautions against treachery at home had been redoubled. All per-

sons suspected of royalist sympathies were packed off into jail; and, in September, the precautions began to take a more violent and lawless shape. With the connivance, if not by the actual orders, of the Revolutionary leaders, a set of city roughs went round the jails, dragged out the prisoners, and slaughtered them by hundreds in cold blood. Fear of the foreign enemy was setting passions loose, which, if not controlled by the leaders, would end, as we have said, by sweeping them too away.

With the September massacres, the three years of thorough and constructive progress ended. The next three years were a bewildering chaos of heroism and horror, fantastic dreams of an unrealised millenium alternating with the stern realities of unutterable despair. In those three years two facts stand out, the grand national rally to the defence of France—and the Terror. On the 19th of September, the fate of the Revolution appeared already sealed. The Austrian and Prussian armies were marching towards the capital, and between them and their goal lay but Dumouriez, the revolutionary general, with a mixed demoralised force, hastily levied from the fields of France. On 20th September the two armies met at Valmy. The enemy led off with a terrific cannonade; but, for some reason which has never been explained, the charge that should have followed never came. The weather was drenching. There was much sickness in the German camp; and after a week of hesitation the enemy wheeled round and retired upon his tracks. France for the moment was saved, and the enthusiasm of that victory ran through the country like a thrill of returning life. Both within and without the number of her enemies increased. A counter-revolution was started by the royalist leaders among the conservative peasants of La Vendée in the west. In 1793, a coalition of European powers was formed against her. Yet with each fresh menace the fighting spirit of the Gaul rose higher. Already, before Valmy, volunteers from the provinces had poured in. Six hundred enthusiasts had marched up from Marseilles, covering eighteen miles a day,

and dragging field-pieces along with them; and the song they sang upon the route became the famous battle hymn of the new Republic. When volunteers were not enough, France fell back upon the remedy of conscription; and against the professional armies of her foes she pitted a new kind of soldier—the first truly national levy of modern times. Before the three years were out, she was fighting at more points than one on foreign soil. The period of “civil tumult” had ended. The war of conquest had begun.

Meantime in Paris, still the factory of the Revolution, events had taken a strange turn. The National Assembly sat there no longer. Its successor, the Legislative Assembly, which had laid down the laws for the new order of affairs, and which witnessed the September massacres and the mob’s attack upon the Tuileries had also passed. On the very day of Valmy a third body had taken its place. It was called the “Convention”. The temper of this new government, as the crisis of the hour demanded, was resolute and fierce. Its chief leaders were the trio whose very names are still memories of fear—Danton, Marat, Robespierre; the first, a generous-hearted, loud-mouthed giant; the second, a hideous, half-crazy, yellow-skinned dwarf; the third, an elegant dandy with cold eyes and a cold heart. It would be an absurd error to imagine that these three men were by nature uncivilised barbarians. As a young man seeking admission to the bar, Danton had delivered extempore and in the Latin tongue a speech on “the moral and political situations of the country in their relations with the administration of justice”. Robespierre was a precise, if somewhat pedantic, student of the law; he had written several pamphlets of a philosophical sort, one arguing that capital punishment was undesirable. Marat was a journalist, with a jaundiced mind and a vitriolic pen. All three were for pushing the Revolution to the uttermost, and all three believed honestly and zealously that they were right. They belonged to the party called the “Mountain,”¹ which stood

¹ The name was an allusion to the elevated benches in the Assembly room on which this party sat.

for the narrow supremacy of a *Parisian* Government, and to which was opposed in the Convention another and more liberal party called the "Girondists,"¹ pledged to support the interests of the Republic as a whole. Under the leadership of these three men, backed by their partisans the Paris mob, the extremist party of the "Mountain" gradually won control; and the history of their ascendancy is a continuous progress down the path of crime. The Convention began its labours by abolishing the Monarchy and declaring a Republic. On 21st January of 1793 it executed the King (and in the autumn of that year the Queen). Maddened by the fear of treachery and invasion, it appointed in April a small body of nine persons possessing unlimited powers for trial or arrest, and known as the Committee of Public Safety. In June it turned upon the Girondist section of its members and committed their leaders to prison. Then the Terror began; and from this time on the cry for blood grew ever louder and more continuous till, swelling with a horrible crescendo, it finally claimed as victims the very men who first let the foul passion loose. In July Marat was assassinated by a young girl called Charlotte Corday, who dreamed by his murder to deliver France and set free the Girondists; but she only succeeded in quickening the action of the guillotine. The Girondist leaders were the first victims of a bloody revenge. But the Terror was doubled. In March of '94 Danton, who had begun to shrink back from such excesses, became suspect and was ordered to his death. During the summer months it became a simple massacre. Thousands upon thousands of suspected persons were packed into the jails. It was better, so they said, to kill some innocents than to allow any of the guilty to escape. The trials were a farce; and each day the tumbrils carried the condemned in batches at a time to the place of execution, where fiendish women sat to enjoy the spectacle and knit their husbands' socks. Of this spirit, which we call the Terror, Robespierre was at once the

¹ The Gironde, from which these deputies drew their name, is a district round Bordeaux.

master and the slave. Since the death of his two confederates he alone directed the Convention's policy, and directed it along strange paths. His detached visionary mind looked away beyond these sordid necessities of method to the ideal conception of a perfect State, the creation of his brain. For him a new and golden era was about to begin on earth, a millenium planned by the logic of pure reason and perfect as a rule in algebra. All the hampering irrational traditions of the past were to be cut clean away. The very calendar was to be remodelled. The year itself was rechristened "First of the Republic". The week was abolished and the months renamed.¹ Christianity was discarded as an outworn superstition. The Church, which had shown itself too much a friend of the old order and too little of the new, was unceremoniously displaced. Instead of Christ was set up a new "Goddess of Reason," and a young lady was actually invited to impersonate that deity on the altar at Notre Dame.² All this midsummer madness was, in part, the fancy of the theorists who led, and, in part, a reflection of the crazy delirium of the mob that followed. Robespierre had not the will, or, if the will, no power to call halt now; and, just so long as the policy of anarchy and bloodshed chimed in with the temper of the crowd, so long and no longer could he hope to keep his place. He was like a horse galloping down hill with a waggon at his heels beyond control. Forward he must go; stop he dare not, lest he be crushed beneath the wheels. And, sure enough, the time was at hand when the passions which Robespierre had aroused would lay claim to his life too. In July of '94 he was shouted down in the Convention. He attempted to raise an insurrection in his own defence, was caught in the Hôtel de Ville, and there arrested, his jaw broken and mangled by a pistol-shot. Next day, as he passed through the streets upon the tumbril, his broken jaw bound up in filthy rags and jerking open at

¹ The new month names were adapted to the seasons in which they fell; thus, Nivôse (Snowy), Pluviôse (Rainy), and Ventôse (Windy), were the winter months; Germinal (the month of Budding) came in spring; Fructidor (the month of Fruit) in late summer.

² Not actually Robespierre's doing; he inaugurated the worship of the "Supreme Being".

every motion of the cart, the mob, whose howlings he had so long encouraged and so long regarded as the basis of his power, now lined the pavements of the route and jeered him on to death.

But the fever had worked itself out. The Terror passed, as the worst of things must do. It had partly purged away the ugly passions which inspired it. By ruthless extermination it had destroyed very many of the old nobility. It left France henceforward a nation without an upper class. And, as the Convention made way for a new government provided for by the rules of the new constitution, the Revolution entered its last phase. Under the "Directory," as the new government was called, the lust for bloodshed vanished, but the spirit of military enterprise remained. Like Trotsky's Government in Russia, the Directory set out to win the world for their new social order. The message of liberation was trumpeted forth to an astonished world, and democracy was to be carried to the oppressed peoples of the rest of Europe at the bayonet's point. Among the military commanders sent forth to this new crusade was a young officer who had already won distinction for himself in Paris by ordering his artillery to fire upon the mob and thus saving the Convention from destruction. Napoleon Bonaparte was the name of this young officer; and the brilliant victories he was about to win were presently to place him above the control of directories or laws. As the crusading zeal of French democracy changed to a lust for conquest and rapine, Napoleon, in whose genius were embodied all the perilous ambitions of this new and latest phase, mounted on the rising tide of popularity from General to Dictator, and from Dictator to Emperor of France. So the wheel was to come full circle; and the country that had killed the King who taxed her too severely thus delivered herself over to a more imperious master, who, for his own selfish purposes, was soon to bleed her white.

IV

Meanwhile in England the Revolution had been watched with an absorbing interest. Its earlier stages had aroused,

even in serious thinkers, fantastic hopes for the betterment of the world; and, though many sad, 'old Tories' shook their knowing heads, the more liberal-minded among Englishmen saluted the dawn of a new era in which tyranny should reign no more. Young poets, like Coleridge and Wordsworth, went into raptures and wrote ecstatic odes in praise of liberty. Wordsworth, eager to take part in the great enterprise, crossed over in person to Paris, where, needless to say, he underwent a rapid process of disillusionment. Politicians, too, were equally at fault. Whig champions of democracy waxed eloquent over the triumph of the people's cause, and compared it to their own historic but tamer Revolution of 1689. Fox grew quite lyrical over the fall of the Bastille—"how much the greatest event that has happened in the world and how much the best!" The young Pitt, though more restrained, was not by any means unfriendly. As a peace-lover, he had no desire to interfere. As Prime Minister, he regarded it as England's duty to stand by and watch events. Burke alone seems to have understood the dangers; and, though he spoke out in grave and anxious warning, none paid much heed. Thus three years passed. Then came the September massacres of '92, the rise of the Convention, and, in January of '93, the execution of the King. From that moment English feeling was completely changed. The nation went into mourning; the theatres were closed; those who till lately had been loudest in their praises were now most vigorous in denouncing France. No adjectives were bad enough for these inhuman monsters who had killed their King; and many seriously believed that the Jacobins were turning cannibal and drank their victims' blood. Like the Bolsheviks of Russia, the Revolutionary Government was regarded as the subverters of law and order, destroyers of property, enemies of civilisation, traitors to the world. A fierce cry went up for war. That step, as we have seen, had already been taken both by Austria and by Prussia; and in February of '93, within a few weeks of Louis' execution, England joined their ranks. The threat to the Low Countries acted now.

as in the later days of the Great War, as a stimulus to our zeal. As little could we afford to see Flanders fall to France in 1793 as to see it fall to Germany in 1914. So we prepared to do what was obviously to our political advantage under the more specious pretext of upholding a high moral principle. Holland, menaced equally by the revolutionists' advance into the Austrian Netherlands, grew nervous and followed suit; and Spain's adherence completed the First Coalition of European Powers.

Few campaigns have ever been more miserably bungled than the First Coalition's campaign against revolutionary France. There was no central plan. Each of the five allies attacked wherever and whenever appeared best in their own eyes; and in the summer of '93 there were no less than eight separate foreign armies on French soil. We ourselves sent one force to Brittany, a second to Flanders, a third to Toulon; nor did we make much better use of our opportunities at sea. True that in '94, on the "Glorious First of June," Lord Howe defeated the French fleet off Brest; but, even so, Brest itself was never properly blockaded. In the Mediterranean we first let our ships lie idle, and, when they might have been of use on the Italian coast, withdrew them altogether. All that we could boast was some small success among West Indian islands. It was a sorry show; and, had it not been for this absurd misuse and dissipation of the Allies' forces, France would not have had one chance in ten of surviving the attack. But that chance was given her, and she took it with a magnificent bravado. Whatever the crimes of her internal politics, her military spirit was beyond all praise. Carnot, the great organiser of the Republican conscription, was a man of immense genius; but he would have been helpless without the national genius of a fighting race to back him. Listen to the advice which was given the Convention: "Each of us has something to give. Let each be found at his post; let the young men fight; let the old men transport ammunition; let the women make tents, sew uniforms, or nurse the wounded; even the very children can make

lint or fold a bandage". That was the spirit which the defence of France called forth. In the first levy of '93 three hundred thousand men were raised. Before the war was many years old the numbers had swelled to nearly a million and a half.¹ Ill-armed, in tattered uniforms or none at all, often barefoot or with wooden sabots on their feet, these young lads, called up from the French farmsteads, flung themselves desperately, blindly, but with an almost religious faith in their good cause, against the trained professional ranks of their opponents. They shouted the "Marseillaise" as they went forward. They died with the name of France upon their lips; and not once nor twice, but many times, they conquered. Such a spirit was a new phenomenon in Europe, and there was no withstanding it. First Holland in '94, then Spain and Prussia in '95, made peace and called their battered armies off. Of all the Coalition Austria and England alone remained; and very soon Austria, too, was to confess defeat.

For the year '96, the French Government planned to deal two blows at her in different quarters. One, a direct blow, delivered by the armies of the Rhine, failed dismally and left the Republic's military strength much shaken. The other blow was to be aimed at North Italy, where Milan was still Austria's property outright and the remaining states under her influence. The conduct of this southern campaign was given to Napoleon, and very wonderful use he made of his command. The army which he found dispirited and sullen he at once roused to warlike ardour by an unscrupulous promise of rich spoils. Then, starting in April, he first turned the barrier of the Western Alps and descended on the plain. By middle May he had stormed the Austrian positions at the Bridge of Lodi, and made his entry into Milan itself. In the beginning of the next year, he beat the

¹ It must not be thought, however, that the enthusiasm of these raw recruits was alone sufficient to carry them to victory. Without the staunchness and good discipline of the old regiments of Louis' regulars to stiffen them, these new levies would have been helpless, whether at Valmy or elsewhere. Even as things were, their moral was at the outset anything but perfect.

enemy decisively at Rivoli, and drove them altogether off Italian soil, having won (as he told his troops) "fourteen pitched battles and seventy actions, taken a hundred thousand prisoners, five hundred field pieces, two thousand heavy cannon, and four pontoon-trains". Yet even this did not content him. He climbed the high passes of the Eastern Alps and marched against Vienna, until the Austrians, nervous for their capital, were compelled to sue for peace. Napoleon gave them peace, gave them, too, what for all his victories was in no sense his to give—for, with a cynical disregard of the professed French principles of liberty, he handed over the free state of Venice into Austria's keeping. Yet, from his own point of view the bargain paid. The rest of North Italy, formed into a new Republic, was no better than a puppet in French hands, and, more important still, Austria was out of the war. When Napoleon returned to Paris with the new treaty in his pocket amid the deafening plaudits of a doting populace, it was clear that there remained in Europe but two forces which still counted. One force was this extraordinary young man himself—not the strict, stout, martial figure of his later years—thin, wistful, sallow, poor-looking, ill-kept, yet with a piercing eye which seemed to range beyond the moment's tumult or applause to a dream that is only dreamt by mortal man once in a thousand years. It had been Alexander's dream, and Charlemagne's. It was to be Napoleon's now. And the other force was England, isolated indeed, without a friend, but nevertheless determined, whether with help or without it, to defeat the new-born aspirations of her age-long rival France. Between these two antagonists it was henceforward to be a duel to the death.

CHAPTER XIII

NAPOLEON IN THE EAST

NAPOLEON Bonaparte was born in Corsica in 1769. His family was of the nobility. His brothers and sisters were numerous and not without their parts ; several of them, in the hey-day of his fortune, wore European crowns. At the early age of ten he was sent as a cadet to a French military academy—a good beginning for a future conqueror. But he was melancholy at school, won no great laurels, and at one time thought of absconding to join the British navy. Fate, however, decreed otherwise. His term of apprenticeship was duly finished and he entered the service of Louis XVI as a gunnery lieutenant. When the great upheaval came, he got home to Corsica; elected, despite his noble blood, to support the Revolution, aimed perhaps—though barely of age—at making himself dictator of the island, and, failing in this, fled. On rejoining the French army, he soon won considerable distinction by helping to recover Toulon from the British hands. After that his rise was swift. His manifest genius, his faculty for quick decision, his masterful determination to succeed at whatever cost, found an unrivalled field of action in these unsettled times. Something, too, in his nature—his dramatic touch in appealing to the emotion of the moment, his king-like habit of imperious self-assertion—touched a sympathetic chord in the French people. Having destroyed their monarch, they were yearning for a leader; sick to death of political muddlers, they demanded a man who could fight; and in Napoleon they found both. No man ever held such mastery over a people's soul as he did;

in a more superstitious age they would have worshipped him as a god. Over the men of his armies he exercised a peculiar fascination; they warmed under the caress of his eyes when they were tender, quailed in abject submission when they blazed in sudden wrath. At the magic of his presence they would march double; and renew a hopeless fight with a new ardour at the least signal from his hand. On his return from Elba he drew his veterans to him like a wizard with his pipe, and in the final agony of Waterloo, when the last hope had vanished, the wizard could still pipe them on to death without a murmur raised. Such willing sacrifice Napoleon took, accepting it as his right, without mercy, without gratitude. In Russia, when he saw the game was up, he left his men to the Cossacks and the snows, and himself made home to safety; and once in his earlier years, they say, he ordered an infantry attack simply to show a lady friend what it was like. His devotion, in fact, was given wholly to a cause, and that cause, victory—not for his army, not for France, but for himself. In the council-chamber, as on the battlefield, he pursued no other object and acknowledged no wider claim or higher call. Religion and duty had no meaning for his mind. The ideals of Revolutionary France were nothing to him; and, as though to advertise his scorn of liberty, he was ready to enslave first Venice, then half Europe, and, had it been permitted him, the world. Moral principles he never recognised, when they stood across his path, as when in Palestine he slaughtered twelve hundred prisoners in cold blood, because he found them an encumbrance to his plans. For he held, as the Germans held in 1914, that necessity knows no law; and, as the Germans reaped, so equally reaped he. The conscience of mankind condemned Napoleon, not so much for the ambitions which he had, as for the ideals he had not; and there is one victory which the world will never permanently tolerate—the victory which robs it of its soul.

When Napoleon came back from Italy in 1797, the Revolutionary Government were not a little embarrassed

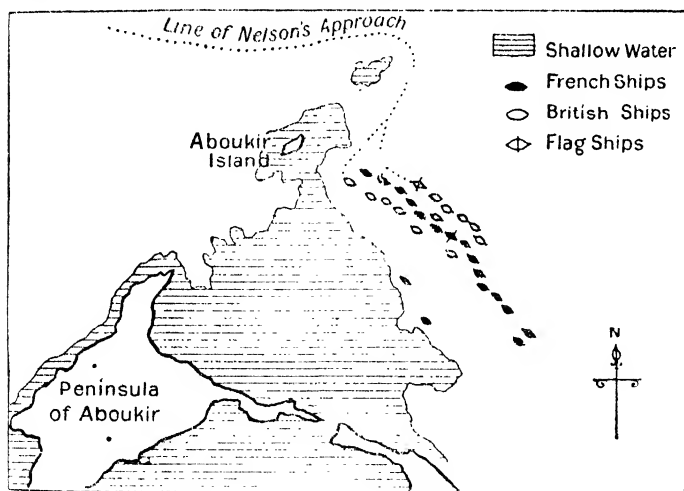
at his presence. Throughout the campaign against Austria, he had acted almost entirely at his own discretion, and at times in blank defiance of their orders. It would never have done to have him acting so in Paris; and their most immediate concern was to find for this uncomfortable prodigy some occupation which would keep him out of mischief. A proposal was then on foot to invade England, and Napoleon was offered the command. But he would have none of it. An undertaking of such magnitude, and in such near proximity to Paris, would have put his reputation too decisively to the touch. He preferred to go farther afield; and the plan revolving in his brain, if more adventurous, had at least the merit of being sufficiently remote. The East attracted him, as it has attracted many another kindred spirit both before and since; and he proposed to strike at England by way of the Levant. Egypt, the Syrian coast, Asia Minor, and the Balkans, were all in Turkish hands; but to Napoleon the Turks seemed not too formidable a foe, and, once that barrier had been broken down, the road lay clear to India; the embarrassment to England would be obvious, and who knew what boundless empire might not yet attend a victorious excursion beyond Suez? So it was eastward that this second Alexander turned his steps. The secret of his plan was closely guarded, and, when in the spring of '98 he slipped out with the Toulon fleet and several hundred transports, there was not the slightest clue to his intention. First he pounced down on Malta, "the strongest place in Europe," so he said, and extremely useful to him as a half-way base. Having occupied the island and installed a garrison, he set his compass eastward once again and vanished.

England had, as usual, been caught napping; but there was some excuse. It had been a black year for us, full of untoward incidents and menacing alarms. The infection of the Revolution had begun to spread. The seamen of our fleet had mutinied at Spithead and the Nore, hoisting the red flag and claiming to elect their own officers in

"Soviet" fashion. The desertion of our continental allies had left us in great peril, more especially since Spain had now taken sides with France. Our very shores had been threatened with invasion; and, in order to concentrate our vessels in home waters, the Mediterranean squadron, as we observed above, had been withdrawn. So it was not until Napoleon was on the very eve of his departure for the East that our Government had scented the possibility of trouble in that quarter and had despatched a squadron of eleven ships to watch over Toulon. The commander of this squadron bore a name which, though at that time hardly familiar to most Englishmen, is now famous throughout the world, Horatio Nelson. Nelson had served during the war of the American Rebellion. Of late he had been with Jervis, acting sentry over Spain, and barely twelve months before he had fought, and lost an arm, in Jervis's great victory off Cape St. Vincent. His experience, therefore, was manifold and varied; and what experience could not teach him a natural genius for seamanship supplied. But not even Nelson could work miracles. Thanks to tempestuous weather, he had to go to Toulon without his frigates; a fleet without frigates was like an army without scouts; and the fact that Napoleon escaped from harbour unobserved was due to no lack of vigilance on Nelson's part. Nor did he hesitate to act. Instinct told him to go east, and east he went, got news off Sicily that his quarry had passed Malta, and pressed on in hot pursuit. Somewhere between Sicily and Suez he ran through Napoleon's fleet on a dark night, and never knew it; reached Egypt only to find the harbours empty, and raced back to Sicily in despair. The disappointment and suspense were cruel; but after two months of ineffectual cruising Nelson had his reward. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon of the first day of August he discovered the French fleet, which had so long eluded him, lying snugly at anchor in Aboukir Bay. To the enemy Nelson's appearance was a complete surprise. They had parties ashore at the moment, and, being in no way prepared for the attack, they met it riding at their moorings as they

lay, stretched stem to stern in a long line across the bight. This was a serious blunder, and it gave Nelson his chance. The tactics of sea warfare had not greatly changed since the time of the Armada. The vessels had improved; guns were more powerful and more numerous; but broadsides delivered at short range were still the chief method of attack, and boarding-parties were frequently employed to finish the foe off. One all-important lesson, however, Nelson had long since mastered, taking a leaf from Rodney's book. He endeavoured, whenever possible, to concentrate his fire on a single portion of the opposing fleet and to annihilate that portion, before the rest was able to engage. The immobility of the French ships, now lying before him in the bay, gave a splendid opening for this particular manœuvre, and, though it was already well on in the afternoon when he first sighted them, he at once determined to close in and to concentrate the full force of his attack *on the head of the French line*. Half his ships accordingly manœuvred into position along the Frenchmen's seaward flank. The other half were to take them from the landward; but to gain this station was no easy matter. The French ships, as we have said, stretched well across the bay, and the head of their line was divided from the shore by only a narrow gap of shallow water. But his men knew Nelson's maxim that "where a French ship can swing, our ships can pass"; and, steering boldly for the gap, they cleared through and anchored, like their fellows, abreast of the French van. Then began a terrible bombardment. The French van, caught as it were, "between a pair of nut-crackers," was raked by broadsides upon either flank. The ships had neither space nor enterprise to break moorings or manœuvre, and, while the rest of the line lay helpless and inactive in their rear, ship after ship succumbed under the blast and struck its colours. Night fell and the moon came up over a scene of awful grandeur. Smoke rolled in lurid clouds over the bay, lit by the conflagration of the burning hulks and broken ever and anon by the sharp spitting broadsides of the guns. As they mastered first

one ship then another, the British crept forward down the line. Some they reduced to match-board and left them well-nigh sinking. In the flag-ship, near the centre, their shots found the magazine and sent the vessel skyward with a terrible explosion. It was hot work, and shortly after midnight a brief halt was called to give the gunners rest. When the bombardment was renewed, the enemy lost heart, and a general surrender followed. Of the whole fleet two ships alone escaped ; thus, signally, did Nelson retrieve the



THE BATTLE OF THE NILE.

unfortunate mischance which had allowed the enemy to get to Egypt. But he had done more than this. He had made it a moral certainty that they could not get back.

In his heart of hearts Napoleon knew that he was beaten from the moment his fleet was lost. But it was characteristic of his genius that, if one plan should fail him, he would invariably fall back upon another ; and he did so now. It had been, as we have said, his original intention, or at any rate his dream, to strike at India ; and in India his agents were already busy preparing him the way.

Lured on by specious promises of help, Tippoo Sahib, the native ruler of Mysore, had been persuaded to turn on his old enemies the British; and no sooner did he learn that Napoleon had reached Egypt than he hastened into premature revolt. His zeal was ill repaid. The forces dispatched by our Governor-General, Marquis Wellesley, defeated him twice upon the field, drove him back into his capital, and killed him in the storming of the town—a brilliant feat of arms, in which no small part was played by the Marquis's younger brother, one day destined to become the Duke of Wellington and to win Waterloo. Tippoo's fate was the fate of many another who pinned his trust upon the Frenchman's word; for, long ere his Indian ally had paid the price of a misguided confidence, Napoleon had forgotten all about him. And, indeed, there were other problems far more pressing than the salvation of Mysore. All communication between France and Egypt had now been cut by sea. To advance was out of the question, to get home by no means easy. One route alone existed, *viâ* Syria, Asia Minor, and the Dardanelles, and that route was in Turkish hands. The Turks, however, presented to Napoleon's eye no serious obstacle. Already in Egypt their subject viceroys, called the Mamelukes, had crumpled easily before his arms; and in a battle fought beneath the Pyramids their Arab cavalry had been scattered like the dust. As his sanguine spirits recovered from the shock of Nelson's victory, Napoleon began to delude himself with a new hope, and to anticipate the conquest of the whole Turkish realm. Like the theatrical hypocrite he always was, he prepared the way by announcing his conversion to the Mohammedan religion, and, recalling the zeal with which revolutionary France had recently attacked the Christian faith, invited all true followers of Allah and the Prophet to accept him as their leader. The Turks, however, were neither so foolish nor so feeble as he fancied. They had now a British naval squadron to support them; and Bonaparte was very soon to meet his match. After a toilsome march across the desert, and northward up the coast of Palestine, he found

the town of Acre, equipped with guns and garrison, across his path. Rather than leave a hostile post uncaptured in his rear, he turned aside to attack Acre, "a miserable fort" as he pronounced, and held, so he imagined, by a handful of mere Turks. In the offing, however, lay a small fleet of British ships, and in command of those ships a man, Sir Sidney Smith, who was to "spoil Napoleon's destiny". When the French, half despising the task which lay before them, advanced to the attack, they found their batteries covered by the fire of the ship's guns. When their miners blew a gap in the town walls, they found British blue-jackets fighting alongside the Turkish soldiers at the breach. Assault after assault was flung back with heavy loss. Food was hard to come by in such a desert country, and the Frenchmen's store of ammunition ran so low that they were forced to collect the cannon balls fired by the British guns and use them in their own. Thus the place which Napoleon had counted on carrying in five days at most held on for fifty; and on the fifty-first a great fleet of Turkish transports, with seven thousand troops on board, appeared on the horizon. As they approached, however, the wind dropped, and Napoleon, seeing them becalmed, spurred on his men to a last effort. This too was beaten back; and with an ill grace he accepted his defeat. He told the army that Acre was destroyed, and that the mere capture of its ruins would be a waste of precious lives. Then, destroying his siege batteries, he turned upon his tracks, and crept back sullen and despondent into Egypt.

Napoleon's one thought now was how he could himself get safely home to Paris. He had lately received dispatches (which by the tactful but not wholly disinterested courtesy of Sidney Smith had been allowed to pass) describing the plight of France in the most gloomy colours. This decided him. It was a big risk to take the sea with the British fleet on watch; but there was no other way, and in the autumn of '99 Napoleon sailed from Egypt with two frigates, his expert mathematical advisers, and several members of his staff. The army, which was given no

warning of his flight, he left marooned. It maintained itself upon the country till next year, when a British force came out under Abercromby to give it the *coup de grâce*. The French opposed his landing with a stout defence; fought twice, and were twice defeated near Alexandria, and finally, though opposed by much inferior numbers, surrendered to a man. Meanwhile, their truant leader had made good his passage of the sea, and landing on French soil had made straight for Paris. There once again a crisis was approaching. The people were tired of the Directory's misrule; and, instead of denouncing the man who had first led off their precious army on a wild goose chase, then come away and left the men behind, they greeted Napoleon's home-coming with manifest relief. The Government were in no mood, however, to surrender their power; for greater security they retired outside the capital to the palace of St. Cloud; and there through one long critical day they strove to uphold their waning authority, and to stamp Napoleon as a traitor. Towards evening, however, the soldiers came out upon his side. Bayonets were fixed; the deputies took fright, and jumping out of the windows scattered into the darkness. On the morrow, Napoleon was appointed First Consul of the State. He was now virtually Dictator, and under his leadership France turned with a new buoyancy of spirit to face the troubles that beset her.

And, indeed, during Napoleon's absence in the East troubles had gathered round her thick and fast. Since the "First Coalition" of her enemies had broken up, Pitt had not rested in his efforts to revive it. Nelson's great victory in Egypt had given fresh hope and confidence to Europe; and now a "Second Coalition," not less powerful than the first, was threatening France. England, Austria, and Russia were all combined for her undoing. Austria had recovered her hold upon North Italy. Her armies were hammering at the gateways of the Rhine. The Revolution was once more in danger; the First Consul was appointed to save it; and save it he did with most alarming speed.

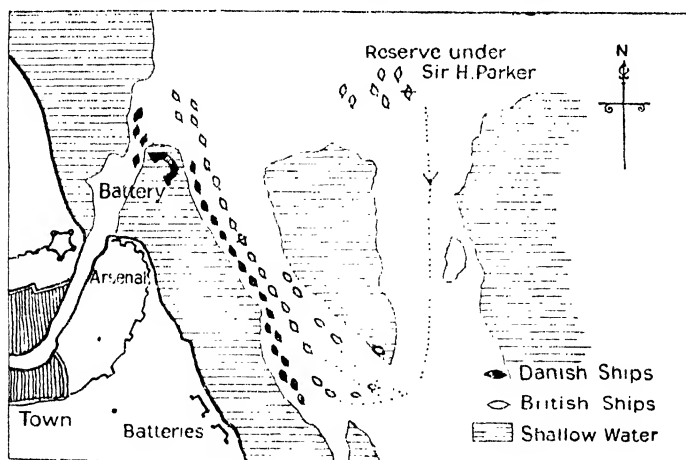
In the early months of the new century he gathered his army and swept south. He crossed the great St. Bernard, while the snows were thick, and descended upon the astonished Austrians in the Lombard plains. But he fell for once into the fatal error of underrating his opponents. At Marengo he was all but overwhelmed. His troops, however, though defeated in the morning, turned the tables in the afternoon and won so complete a triumph that it decided the campaign. Beaten soon afterwards upon the Rhine, Austria succumbed under the double blow. She made peace in the first months of 1801. The eccentric Tsar Paul of Russia, having changed his mind, was already a deserter from the cause. Thus the "Second Coalition" perished like the first; and once more England and Napoleon were face to face alone.

Nothing perhaps so much distinguished Napoleon from the rank and file of ordinary generals as his statesmanship. He understood that even war is two parts politics, and that a campaign may often be less effective than diplomacy. His calculations were made not in armies, but in continents, and geography occupied his thoughts as well as guns. So it was natural that by now he had begun to understand with what kind of adversary he had to deal. He knew—and no man better—that England's strength lay on the seas, and that her position as an island rendered her immune from all normal methods of attack. But equally he perceived how that same insular position might be also turned to England's disadvantage. Trade was very life to her; trade filled the coffers which financed her armies; trade brought much of the material which supplied her fleet; and, if her trade were interrupted, England would be helpless, might even be brought to her knees without so much as a blow struck. Now, amongst the many countries on whom we then depended for our overseas supplies, not the least important were the States of North Europe and the Baltic coast—Denmark, Sweden, and Russia. These states had hitherto been well disposed, and, as neutrals, had been ready and eager to supply our needs. But, as neutrals, they were

equally desirous to supply the needs of France, and this, of course, we could not tolerate. We had declared a blockade against all contraband, and neutrals were not a little inconvenienced by our interference with their sea-borne traffic and our strict enforcement of the right of search. It was the same in 1800 as in 1914. The British naval power was viewed with much suspicion; our fleet's activities were bitterly resented; and this resentment Napoleon now proceeded to turn to his account. Fortune had placed in his hands, as it so happened, an extremely useful tool. The Tsar Paul, as we have said, had recently been converted to his side. He was a crazy fellow; Napoleon could twist him round his little finger, and it needed no great pressure to induce him to organise a league of offended neutrals against England. In this Armed Neutrality, as it was called, Russia was joined by the Prussians, Swedes, and Danes. All four claimed the right to carry contraband to France, and asserted their intention of convoying such material with their own men-of-war. Paul went still further and seized all British ships lying in Russian ports. It was clear that, even if it did not come to war, England could count no longer on her North Sea trade.

Here was a challenge to England which no decent government could overlook. It was as though in the late war the United States had sent the *Lusitania* with a destroyer at her side to carry guns to Kiel. Pitt acted promptly. Without officially declaring war, he dispatched a fleet to the Baltic under Admiral Hyde Parker with Nelson as second in command. Parker was elderly and nervous. He was afraid of "ice-packs" and "dark nights" at sea, and it was well that Nelson was there "to brace him up". The fleet made for Copenhagen, the Danish capital, and demanded an instant withdrawal from the League; and the demand was refused. There was a powerful Danish fleet in Copenhagen. The town forts were heavily gunned. The approach through the mud banks was extremely intricate and dangerous. None but Nelson would have had the courage to attempt an entry. Sir Hyde Parker certainly had not, but, after a long tussle, Nelson had his way, and

the fleet was ordered to attack. As Nelson went up through the channel, three of his largest vessels ran aground, and when he closed in upon the Danes it was with an actual inferiority of numbers. The advantage of position too lay with the enemy. Their ships, like those of the French at Aboukir, were drawn up at anchor, stretched in a long line before the town and close inshore. The fire of their fixed batteries commanded the approaches to the harbour, and protected the ships' line on either flank, while fresh supplies and reinforcements were waiting on the foreshore to be



THE BATTLE OF COPENHAGEN.

ferried out whenever need arose. Such odds were enough to make even a Nelson quail, as he laid his ships alongside the enemy. Three solid hours of cannonading followed, and the prospects still appeared as black as ever. The British ships had suffered seriously, and as yet not a single Danish ship had struck its colours. Sir Hyde Parker, who was lying in the offing with a reserve of eight fine vessels, began to fidget and show signs of nerves. At last he could bear the responsibility no longer and ran up the famous signal, No. 39—the order to cease action. Nelson made up

his mind in a moment. He determined to disobey and, putting his glass to his blind eye, humorously remarked that he could not see the signal. Then he turned to resume the action with redoubled energy. By two o'clock the worst was over. The Danish fire was slackening, but, though many of their ships had yielded, the land batteries were as vigorous as ever. Nelson, with more bluff perhaps than generosity, offered the enemy truce, and the offer was accepted. The Danes had been read their lesson, and the British fleet turned east to deal with Russia. There, however, events had meanwhile moved more rapidly than even the British fleet. The old Tsar Paul, Napoleon's crazy friend, had met his death by an assassin's hand. His successor, who had no stomach for continuing the quarrel, lost no time in making his peace with England. There was no need for a second Copenhagen, and without any further trouble on our part the "Armed Neutrality" melted away.

Napoleon stamped with rage when the news of these developments reached him, but, for the time being, at least, he recognised that he was done. France was sorely in need of rest. After ten years of constant fighting it was well to think of peace, and negotiations were accordingly begun. In the subsequent *pourparlers* Napoleon fooled our diplomats at every turn. Pitt was out of office at last, and, though he approved of peace, the peace his successors made was not after his fashion. We allowed the French to retain the whole country west of the Rhine. We recognised the new Republic in North Italy and (what touched us far more closely) the similar Republic, formed also under the auspices of France, in the Dutch and Belgian Netherlands. In return we got nothing but promises in plenty—promises which Napoleon never meant to keep. Nevertheless, when the Treaty of Amiens was concluded in the March of 1802, it was by no means unwelcome on this side the Channel. Englishmen too were weary, and the respite came none too soon. "It was a peace," they said, "of which every one was glad, but no one proud"; yet little enough did it matter what sort of peace this was, for it lasted precisely twelve months.

CHAPTER XIV

THE YOUNGER PITT AND THE "UNION OF IRELAND"

I

IF the ten years which preceded the Peace of Amiens gave England but a foretaste of what was presently to follow, they were nevertheless a time of heavy stress and deep anxiety. As the months passed and ally after ally left our side, the burden laid upon our shoulders grew to be almost more than we could bear. The rapid and incalculable strokes of Napoleon's strategy set nerves on edge. Our ministers' resources were strained to breaking-point; and the young Pitt was now no longer young. Slowly but surely the war was killing him. True that, much as he hated it, he faced the conflict with a courage worthy of that great fighting man his father. His sanguine temperament was confident of victory; and, just as before he had wilfully closed his eyes to the approaching trouble, so now he doggedly refused to entertain the least suspicion of defeat. He was constantly predicting the collapse of France within the next twelve months; nor did he leave a stone unturned to facilitate her surrender. Not once, but many times, he offered terms of peace, terms which, however, showed neither irresolution, arrogance, nor weakness. There is little wonder that the nation at large soon recognised in Pitt the mainstay of its hopes; or that he was given as free a hand as any man could wish. In the House he was regarded as an oracle; the Cabinet itself he ruled with a rod of iron, sweeping his colleagues along with him when-

ever they shrank from action, and stamping every measure with the impress of his own strong personality. From a military point of view it is perhaps too much to say that Pitt was a success. He had little of his father's breadth of vision. He allowed, as we have seen, too much dissipation of our forces, and he never seems to have had a clear conception of the aim and purpose of our policy on land. Indeed, as in many previous wars upon the continent, we left most of the actual fighting to be done by others, and contented ourselves with affording them financial aid. In this Pitt never erred towards small-minded economy. Vast sums went out from Britain during these years. Loans running into millions went to Austria. Subsidies were doled out with a lavish hand to Prussia, Hanover, Sardinia, Portugal, and half a dozen of the smaller German States. Before he had finished, Pitt had added three hundred million pounds to our public debt. The drain on our resources was without precedent, and the national credit sank so low that a hundred pound share in Consols, the Government stock, was at one time quoted at £47. Pitt borrowed, and borrowed, and borrowed again, till many declared he was ruining the country. Yet there was no alternative. It was impossible to squeeze more money from the taxes. In '96 he trebled many of the rates. In '98 he introduced for the first time a tax on incomes, which took a small proportion from all over £60, and two shillings in the pound from all over £200. Yet, if Pitt's method of finance was bad, it lay with his critics to suggest a better; and at anyrate he won through. England's staying-power was never more triumphantly displayed than under his leadership. Failure by land was more than counter-balanced by victory at sea; and it was not without good reason that Pitt earned the famous title of "the Pilot who weathered the Storm".

Nor was the foreign danger the only problem which Pitt was called to face. England could scarcely pass through this anxious period of unsettlement without alarms at home. The ferment of revolution was brewing secretly

among the more restless portions of the population. Malcontents in town and countryside pointed eagerly to the example set by France—of tyranny vanquished, property redivided, and aristocratic privilege unthroned. Agitators were busy; propaganda was entering from abroad; there were mutinies in the fleet; and even darker conspiracies were hinted at. In 1792 a store of formidable daggers was discovered in Birmingham, and Burke displayed a specimen to the startled House of Commons. The authorities took fright; and recourse was had to stern measures of suppression. An "Aliens' Act" was passed for the arrest of dangerous foreigners. Writers of questionable pamphlets were transported overseas. The "Habeas Corpus Act," which forbade imprisonment on mere suspicion, was for the time suspended. Finally, a Bill was brought in prohibiting all meetings or assemblies of over fifty persons without the express permission of a magistrate. Never since Stuart times had the liberty of Englishmen been so seriously curtailed. But the most famous and important of all Pitt's measures of coercion dealt not with the home country, but with Ireland. The "Act of Union" which brought that country under direct control of the English Parliament, and thus sowed the seed of such unending trouble for future generations, was perhaps the inevitable sequel to much that had gone before. Provocation in plenty there had doubtless been; but there had been misrule as well. Pitt reaped the harvest of his predecessors' folly; and he merely handed on the legacy of evil which he himself received. Nevertheless, the "Union" of 1800 was Pitt's work—strange work for an old Whig champion of freedom and reform; and, during the brief respite from the tale of war which the Peace of Amiens gives us, it will be well to give some account not merely of Pitt's policy itself, but also of the events which, during the previous century, had brought the distressful island to this most unwelcome pass.

II

Before attempting to describe in detail the circumstances which led to the ill-fated Union, it is important to remind ourselves of certain outstanding aspects of the Anglo-Irish problem. It is necessary, in the first place, to remember that in Ireland two elements existed, differing one from the other in race, history, and tradition, and irreconcilably opposed. On the one hand there were the alien settlers, whether Englishmen or Scots, who had from time to time been granted lands in Ireland by William III, Cromwell, James, and Elizabeth, and in whose hands more than three-quarters of the island was now vested. On the other hand there were the natives of the country, whom it had been the deliberate object of this policy to dispossess, and who now for the most part could cultivate the land only as tenants and at the price of heavy rents. The settlers, who numbered but a third or less of the whole population, were most strong and numerous in the northern province of Ulster; but in the other provinces the local peasantry were still equally subjected to these alien landlords, who cared little or nothing for the country, and often did not even reside on their estates. Next, we must note that this serious racial cleavage was the more intensified by an old religious feud. For whereas the settlers were Protestants by extraction, the natives were Catholic to a man. Even in England the feeling against Popery still ran so high that Catholics were spitefully excluded from entering public life; and, as was only natural, the feeling over in Ireland was a hundredfold more strong. Nor were any limits set to men's hatred and distrust. It was the accepted maxim that the only method with an Irish Catholic was to treat him like a beast; and it was barely above a century since the capture of a Jesuit had been bracketed with the slaying of a wolf as worth a ten pound prize from Government. In the third place, we must observe that our commercial policy towards Ireland was precisely on all fours with our attitude towards the colonies at large. We valued Ireland

less indeed than our other overseas possessions, because there was less advantage to be sucked from her. On the other hand, we interfered with her industries far more, because there was far more danger of their competing with our own. Hence we made no pretence whatever to frame our legislation for the island's benefit; and the sufferings inflicted by this selfish policy on both settlers and inhabitants alike were regarded on this side the Irish Channel with absolute indifference. In this we were no better and no worse than other nations of the world. Ours was simply the normal attitude of a strong nation towards its weak dependencies during the eighteenth century. Lastly, we must not omit from our consideration the peculiar Celtic temperament of Irishmen. The average peasant, it is true, was too illiterate, too miserable, and too degraded to form any clear conception of his country's wrongs. The most he would do was to break out at intervals into wild and often barbarous excesses; he had massacred the Protestants with singular brutality in 1641, and he was still capable, as we shall see, of committing midnight outrages on unsuspecting persons or maiming the innocent cattle of his enemies. In the more cultivated minds, however, that were now to undertake the uphill task of championing their helpless countrymen, there was all the high ardour and imaginative force which the Celt has ever thrown into a forlorn and failing cause. The Irish national leaders could then, as they can to-day, work up both in themselves and in their followers a fierce and at times exaggerated sense of their country's grievances. They possessed the art of words and could fire the imagination with a phrase; and, if they deluded their own countrymen with empty hopes, they could no less delude England by false fears. In short, the Irish character has changed but little in a hundred years. It is but a step from the tragic insurrection which failed at Vinegar Hill to the Dublin street fighting of 1916; and the spirit of Edward Fitzgerald and Wolf Tone lives on to this day in de Valera and Sinn Féin.

Ireland was governed by a Viceroy sent out direct from

England and quartered in Dublin Castle with a large, often indolent, and always unsympathetic staff. Like Scotland, however, in the days before the Union, Ireland possessed a Parliament of her own, chosen from time to time by regular election, and entrusted with the making of the local laws. This privilege, to all appearances so generous, was in reality a mere shadow and a fraud. In the first place, the resolutions of the Irish Parliament could be overruled at any time from Westminster, and, without the sanction of the British Government, possessed no binding force. Worse still, since the time of George I at any rate, England had claimed the power to impose what laws she fancied upon Ireland, and against these the Irish Parliament had no redress. In the second place, the privilege of local power, for what that privilege was worth, was concentrated wholly in the hands of Protestants. No Catholic might sit at Dublin as a member; no Catholic might hold public office even of the most humble sort; and, above all, no Catholic might possess a vote. Thus by a system as little democratic as a system well could be, the scales of law and justice were doubly weighted against the native element of the inhabitants; and it will be no great matter for surprise that throughout the eighteenth century the interests of the vast majority of Irishmen went wholly to the wall.

The attack upon the liberties of Catholics began soon after the battle of the Boyne. Though he refrained in England from punishing the supporters of King James, William III was less tender in his dealings with his Irish foes. A savage set of laws were passed which were known as the Penal Code, and to which successive governments kept adding, till it became impossible for Irish Catholics to raise their heads at all. As a result no Catholic was allowed to take a commission in the army, to become a lawyer or a doctor, to keep a school, or even attend a university. He might not purchase land. If he took a Protestant woman as his wife, her land might not be his. He might not go on pilgrimage to holy places; he might not buy a gun to shoot a rabbit; and, if by any chance he owned a horse, its value

might on no account exceed five pounds. These laws were aimed, as may easily be seen, at the folk of the upper class. The Catholic gentry were first to be discredited, and, if all went well with the Protestants' design, they would eventually perhaps have disappeared. But such savage measures defeated their own ends. Juries could not be found to pass verdicts on offenders. The preposterous Penal Code became a dead letter, and the attempt to enforce it strictly was abandoned. To the lower classes of Ireland it had never made much odds. Their miseries were due to legislation of another sort, which we may call the Commercial Code, and which proceeded from jealousies of trade, not creed. The laws of this code, designed as they were to protect the English market at the Irishman's expense, hit every class in Ireland equally; from them, settler and native, labourer and farmer, Protestant and Catholic, all suffered in a lump. Nature had intended Ireland to be one of the richest pastoral countries in the world. Sheep, pigs, and cattle could be raised in immense numbers; all were of excellent quality; and at one time meat, cheese, bacon, wool (raw or manufactured) were exported in abundance. The English farmers, however, had been quick to scent a rival and to grudge the neighbouring island her prosperity. So, in the reign of Charles II, a stringent law was passed forbidding all animals, alive or dead, to leave an Irish port. Soon butter and cheese were likewise laid under the ban. William III had done the same for wool, and George I for cotton. Only the Ulster flax trade, which had no competitors in England, was suffered to survive. By these cruel measures Ireland's future destiny was fixed. Trade might have brought her wealth and a share in the world's good things; but, being deprived of a market for her produce, she naturally abandoned the attempt. The sheep farms went to pieces, manufactures ceased, and all enterprise was stifled at its birth. The country folk fell back on growing just such produce as would satisfy their own domestic needs; and an unkindly fate supplied them with what at first appeared a blessing, but what proved eventually

a curse—the common potato. Potato crops are easily grown and normally prolific, but they are also much subject to disease and apt to fail completely. The result was that Ireland lived under the perpetual fear of famine, and only too often she actually succumbed. Her population thus hovered on the uncertain margin between plenty and starvation. Hard work was at a discount, since the crops depended mainly on the weather. Their habits grew indolent and listless. Lacking all spur to enterprise, they accepted with a sort of fatalistic stupor the degraded life they were compelled to live. Their cottages fell to pieces; the clothes went to tatters on their back; the children grew up ignorant and idle as their fathers. They retained, indeed, their peculiar Celtic passion for romance, their poetical belief in ghosts, banshees, and fairies, their superstitious reverence for the priest, and deep down—now almost crushed beneath the burden of their troubles—the craving that Ireland might once again be free. But they lived the life of pigs; and even the worst paid labourer in England was prosperous by comparison with them.

III

Thus, in 1761, when George III came to ascend the throne of England, Ireland was still suffering under the curse of a twofold tyranny. While the Dublin Parliament was venting its Protestant spite on the great majority of Irishmen, the London Parliament was exercising its commercial jealousy against Ireland as a whole; and such nominal Home Rule as the Dependency enjoyed was either over-ridden or misused. Then occurred two great events, both external to Ireland, but both of profound significance to her development. One was the American Rebellion, the other the Revolution in France. Each in its turn let in a ray of hope on Irish darkness. The sight of their colonial cousins triumphing over the tyrannical mother-country awoke in Irish patriots a desire to follow the bold example. Leaders came out into the open. The spirit of the country found articulate expression. Deeds followed words: in 1782 a full

measure of Home Rule was granted; Ireland was given her head to make what laws she willed, and heal her troubles as she chose. For a while the day of her deliverance appeared to have arrived; but the fatal disunion, so long and so deeply rooted in her history, still remained. Landlords were still selfish, peasants were still miserable and poor, and from this clash of interests a bitter antagonism was born. To allay this spirit of faction was beyond the power of the Dublin Parliament. It first lacked support, then lost authority. Home Rule became a farce, which ended in a tragedy, and in 1800 it was unconditionally withdrawn. The Union took its place.

The story must now be told in greater detail. It was in 1774 that the war with the American Colonies began, raising among the Irish, as we have said, new aspirations and new hopes. In 1778 came the alliance of France with our colonial enemy, setting an additional strain on our naval and military resources and threatening us with the imminent prospect of invasion. It was a critical moment. Ireland had been emptied of troops; her normal garrison had been sent overseas; and a French descent on the undefended island was expected almost hourly. The Irish have a gift for doing the unexpected. Instead of welcoming the enemy as a saviour (which is what many Irishmen would do to-day), they undertook to raise a volunteer contingent for the protection of their shores. The movement began among the Irish Protestants; but, once started, it soon spread. Thousands upon thousands were enrolled and drilled. Every class from peer to peasant was represented in their ranks; and in the enthusiasm of the moment arms were furnished them by England. The volunteer army was never used against the French, for the simple reason that the French never came; but it was soon discovered to have another use. Its guns had hitherto been trained against the enemy; but they could equally be trained against the English. What the American colonies had done, Ireland could do too. The mere threat of such an action, coming as it did at the crisis of the war, was enough to make Lord North's blood run

cold. He did not yield at once to the full extent of their demands, but he nervously began to give some ground, and step by step the emancipation of Ireland was secured. In 1778 the restrictions upon trade were partially removed. In 1780 they were altogether abolished. The Irish Parliament, now conscious of its strength, kept up the pressure, and in 1782, as we have said, it won a very liberal measure of Home Rule. Laws were to be made from Dublin in the future, not from Westminster. Judges were no longer to be appointed by the Crown. Even Ireland's army was henceforth to be in some degree her own. Loyalty, in fact, had proved a paying game; and by her exemplary behaviour (combined with judicious threats) Ireland had secured what open treason never could have won her. The hero of this astute, but honourable policy, was Henry Grattan, the leader and chief spokesman of the Irish House. Grattan was in many ways typical of his country. He was a born orator, and, even in an age of powerful speakers, few could touch him. Words flowed from his quick brain like a torrent, and in the violence of his gestures he would almost sweep the ground. Yet Grattan was no mere demagogue. He possessed a statesman's mind, capable of regarding Ireland's welfare as a whole and utterly free from narrow party spite. He saw that if Home Rule was to prosper it must be real Home Rule—self-government by Catholics no less than Protestants, natives no less than settlers, peasants no less than squires. His was a noble and far-sighted vision; and upon his powers of translating it into fact the future of the great experiment depended. Men believed in Grattan, and Ireland entered the new era with high hopes. Trade at once revived. Broken industries were resumed. Corn and dairy produce were again exported. Dublin, waking as from a sleep, soon hummed with prosperous life, and all seemed well.

Yet all proved but a passing dream. Grattan's policy of liberal-minded but constitutional advance was foredoomed to utter failure, and two obstacles sufficed to overthrow it. One was that old stumbling-block to liberty, the

personal prejudice of George III. As we have said, Grattan was himself firmly determined that the native Catholic Irishman should be treated as an equal and given a due share in the country's government; and for a time his schemes went well. First, the law forbidding Catholics to buy land was abolished. Next came their admission to the public offices and other desirable professions from which they had been debarred. Finally, in '93, they got the vote, and it only remained to secure for them the entry into the Irish Parliament itself—a vital necessity, if Catholic interests were to be properly upheld. Pitt favoured the project, though with certain reservations, and in '95 he appointed as Viceroy of Ireland a certain Lord Fitzwilliam, whose sympathy with the natives' cause was well known. It seemed as though the last step in the emancipation of the Catholics was to be effected. Once over in Dublin, however, the new Viceroy exceeded his instructions. He cast aside Pitt's cautious stipulations. He hobnobbed freely with the Irish leaders, and hurried on a bill for admitting Catholics, unconditionally, to the Parliament. Then came the fatal moment—King George put down his foot, vowed that to sanction such a measure would be to violate his coronation oath, and refused, point-blank, to entertain the thought. Pitt was in an uncomfortable dilemma. The war with France was rising to its height; and he dared not offer to resign. To be brief, he yielded to the King. Fitzwilliam was recalled, and the Bill never passed. Thus Ireland, long tantalised by the deferred hope of freedom, saw the cup dashed, as it were, from her very lips, and, in the bitterness of that disappointment, she turned along other and more desperate paths. For already the second factor in Grattan's tragic failure was rising into sight. A new and revolutionary spirit was abroad in Ireland. The peasants had been fired to wild excitement by the recent events in France. Young patriots, who lacked the steady statesmanship of Grattan, were making wild speeches to enthusiastic crowds and pointing a new road to liberty. Among them were two young firebrands of a dangerous sort—Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Wolfe Tone. Tone was

a restless and adventurous spirit who had failed as a lawyer, dabbled in literature and art, and dreamed of founding a colony in the Pacific Isles. In the new revolutionary movement he found a task well suited to his mind. "Independence or nothing" was the cry he raised, and Ireland rose like one man to the new slogan. As early as '92 the "Volunteers" had begun to reassemble, but with a very different purpose in their minds. They were now a lower-class organisation, determined at all costs to dispossess the rich man and the squire, and, since the Protestant poor of Ulster now threw in their lot with the native Catholic peasants, the name they took was the "United Irishmen". Ireland was never so united as in this unhappy cause.

The train was thus laid for an explosion, and the unfortunate recall of Lord Fitzwilliam fired it. It was a golden opportunity for mischief-makers. The war was raging fiercely on the continent. England's hands were tied. Her fleet was fully engaged, and the hour seemed ripe for calling in the French to assist a revolution. Tone was over in Paris, where he had actually conferred with Bonaparte himself; and late in '96 he embarked with General Hoche and a large contingent of French troops for Ireland. During the passage not a single British vessel was even sighted, and the fleet made Bantry Bay unmolested. But the winter gales were rising. It proved impossible to effect a landing, and, after hanging off the coast for upwards of two weeks, the French fleet put back again for Brest. In the next year, '97, the Dutch, who were now allies of the French, were induced to send out a similar expedition, but it was caught and broken up by Admiral Duncan in the battle of Camperdown. Meantime in Ireland things had gone from bad to worse. The Dublin Government was powerless to check the growing violence. Armed bands had been organised by the landlord faction. Troops had been sent from England to keep order, but with each fresh effort to cow them into submission the temper of the "United Irishmen" became more ugly and more threatening. Hideous outrages were committed upon either side. Men were caught and hung in

numbers by the Government troops. Farms were burnt; villages plundered; women flogged. But the rebels had their revenge, and in the dead of night shots would be fired out of the darkness, and there would be one fewer of the hated landlords in the world. In '98—Ireland's fatal year—things came suddenly to a head. A general insurrection had been planned, and the French were again to be summoned to its aid. The rebels were short of guns (for every step had been taken to disarm them), but they came out with spades and pitch-forks or whatever instrument they could produce. The mail-coaches were held up. Barracks were stormed and burnt; but the British authorities, who had spies in every village, were now thoroughly alert, and only in the south-east did the rising gather full way. Led by a priest named Father Murphy, the rebel bands broke into Wexford city and there butchered every Protestant on whom they could lay hands. But the military were on the march from Dublin. They caught the rebels at their camp on Vinegar Hill, and what followed can scarcely be described as a pitched battle. The hopes so heroically, if rashly, entertained for the deliverance of Ireland ended in an inglorious scramble, and a bloody massacre. When all was over, a French fleet, under General Humbert, arrived upon the scene, too late to be of use. It was easily overpowered. Wolfe Tone was captured, tried for his life at Dublin, but before conviction died in his prison cell. Fitzgerald had already suffered the same fate. The Nationalist cause was extinct.

Home Rule had failed and Pitt recognised its failure. The foul blow in the back which had been dealt at England, at the very moment when she was fighting for her life, seemed to deprive the Irish of all claim to mercy. Pitt had not flinched from taking severe measures with the rebels, and he did not shrink now from the one solution of the problem which alone appeared to offer any guarantee of safety. Ireland was to be brought under direct control from England. Her privilege of self-government, which she had so abused, was to be cancelled. The Dublin Parliament was to be merged with the central Parliament at Westminster.

The first step necessary, however, was to obtain the Dublin Parliament's consent. In '99, therefore, a measure was put before it for "uniting" the two countries. After a fierce debate, which lasted over twenty hours, the votes were equal. The debate was resumed, a fresh division taken, and this time the proposal was thrown out. There remained but one remedy—familiar enough in England and doubly so in Ireland—bribery. Before the next session seats were methodically bought up by English agents, and the recalcitrant members replaced by ones more submissive. The scandal was notorious. Everyone knew what game was being played, and, when the Act of Union was again debated in the House, and this time supported by an overwhelming majority of members, it was said that all but seven of the Government's supporters were in receipt of the Government's pay. By this gross manipulation the Irish Parliament voted itself out of existence, and the British Parliament undertook control of the unhappy island's fate. Two sops were offered as some compensation. One hundred Irish members were to sit at Westminster and safeguard, if they could and if they would, the interests of their countrymen. Whether they would depended on the condition that Catholic members should be admitted with the rest, and it was therefore broadly hinted that the admission of the Catholics would certainly be permitted in due course. This second part of the arrangement, though Pitt had honestly intended to fulfil the promise, came to nothing. King George's conscience would not tolerate a Catholic in the Irish Parliament, much less then in his own. Pitt's protests were in vain, and in 1801, as we have seen already, he was driven to resign. For him the tragedy lay not so much in the brief loss of power as in the sacrifice which he had made of his most cherished principles. He had been false to his ideals of freedom and reform. For Ireland it was something worse than a tragedy. The Union was in truth the nation's grave.

CHAPTER XV

INVASION OR TRAFALGAR

THE Treaty of Amiens was signed in March of 1802 and by the late spring of 1803 France and England were again at war. What causes led to this new rupture it is of no great importance to inquire. Peace with Napoleon was impossible. The provisions of the Treaty he observed neither in spirit nor in letter. In Holland, which he had promised to evacuate, French garrisons were ostentatiously maintained. In North Italy, the storm-centre of continental jealousies, he flung out a novel challenge by accepting for himself the Presidency of the newly formed "Cis-Alpine" State. Egypt, the gateway to our Empire in the East, was once more pestered by his agents. Luckily for ourselves, Malta, that valuable half-way house to Egypt, was still held by British troops; and, though by the terms of our agreement we were pledged to recognise its independence, we now not unjustifiably refused to give it up. Napoleon was furious—furious at our breach of a treaty which he himself had never tried to keep; but with him it was always "Heads I win and tails you lose," and he made a great show of indignation. We stuck to our colours, and for once he bluffed too far. On 18th May, 1803, hostilities were resumed. Henceforward, until the spring of 1805—a space of two full years—we were fighting an uphill battle for our very lives, and fighting it alone. No allies came to our rescue or menaced France upon the Rhine. It was a straight-fought issue between Napoleon and ourselves, a struggle of land-power against sea-power,

the proverbial duel of the "elephant" and the "whale," in which neither antagonist could obtain a mastery in the other's element. To strike at Napoleon on land was for us impossible; equally was it impossible for him to strike at us—except on one condition, the control, for a brief but a sufficient interval, over the narrow seas. Never, indeed, in the whole course of its existence did the British nation stand in such instant jeopardy. Between us and perdition lay nothing but that strip of treacherous water—a passage, in fair weather, of four hours at most—and (happily more reliable) our fleet.

The fatal megalomania—the insolence, the ambition, the imperialism run mad—which was first half to ruin Europe and then wholly to ruin him, was now beginning to disclose itself in the plans of Bonaparte. In France he was supreme. His title of "First Consul" had already been transmuted to "Consulship for life"; and, before another year was over, he was to assume yet larger powers. In the last days of 1804 he summoned the Pope to Paris, received his benediction in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, and there, in presumptuous mimicry of Charles the Great, was consecrated "Emperor of the French". It was characteristic of his growing arrogance that, when the Pope was about to place the crown upon his head, Napoleon took it into his own hands and performed the act himself.* Emperor now in power no less than in title, he assumed an Emperor's pomp; and what fantastic schemes of world-dominion were already shaping in his fertile brain we shall see soon enough. Meanwhile, with the true instinct of a strategist, he perceived that England's conquest was the key-stone to them all, and, when in the summer of 1803 the war was resumed again in earnest, he bent the whole vigour of his unrivalled organising genius to the project of invasion. The French Fleet, our old competitor, had been sorely crippled by the Revolution; and democratic control during the early stages had very seriously impaired its discipline. Napoleon did all he could to speed up new construction and to provide efficient sailors for the manning of his ships; but he saw that it would certainly be

months, and might be years, before the British Navy could be safely challenged; and meanwhile, impatient of delay, he devised another plan. On the hills above Boulogne—within view of the white Kent cliffs on a clear day—there was posted, and had been posted for these three years past, a large contingent of French troops. This "Army of Invasion" was now raised to a hundred thousand men; and Napoleon hoped, though in this he never succeeded, to increase it by half as much again. Flat-bottomed boats were built in prodigious numbers through the length and breadth of France and carried by road to Boulogne. The soldiers were drilled in the routine of embarkation. Every man knew his post, and his course of action when the English shore was reached. Nothing, in fact, was now needed but an opportunity to slip across; and for such an opportunity Napoleon waited. A calm sea, a dark night,—and one fine morning, when the sun rose above the mist, the Army of Invasion would be marching up through Kent. So cocksure was Napoleon of achieving his design that he caused a medal to be struck, which bore the inscription, somewhat premature, "*Descente en Angleterre*" and below—a crowning impudence—"Frappé à Londres".

Under the shadow of this threat England lay expectant for two mortal years. The terror of invasion struck deep into men's minds. To simple rustics the thought of "Boney's" landing was a perpetual nightmare; and for years to come his very name became a household word for frightening naughty babies. The country, however, braced itself to the ordeal, and counter-preparations were hurriedly devised. Within a few months a force of three hundred thousand volunteers was organised and drilled—with Fox, "the pacifist," amongst them. Trenches and fortifications were thrown up at likely landings. Small, round "martello" towers were placed at intervals along the beach. Instructions were issued, in case the worst should happen, for the blocking of roads and the systematic destruction of provisions. A chain of semaphores linked London with the coast. Beacons were placed ready upon every hill-top; and there were night

alarms, when sleepy volunteers would tumble out of bed and rush off, never doubting that the French had really come. But, if there was vigilance on land, much more was there at sea. Night and day the Channel was patrolled by a fleet of fast, light frigates, and these formed an impenetrable barrier to the Army of Invasion. Napoleon's knowledge of the sea was rudimentary; and, at first, he scarcely realised how utterly at the mercy of such vessels his unwieldy flotilla of flat-bottomed boats must be. With the best organisations in the world his army could never have got out of Boulogne harbour under half-a-dozen tides. Once at sea, the flotilla was bound to drift and scatter on the currents; and a series of broad-sides from a single English frigate would have sent boat-load upon boat-load to the bottom. Nor were the frigates all; for behind their screen the ships of the line were waiting, ready to pounce down at the first signal from our scouts, and pinning the French fleets immobile to their harbour-bases. No more complete blockade had been known in history. It was made almost impossible for the enemy to move, and the British admirals—with more reason than Napoleon—were equally confident of their success. "I don't say the French won't come," said Lord St. Vincent, "I only say that they can't come by sea." That was one reason why, in the first months of 1804, Napoleon's plans underwent a sudden change. His navy was steadily improving. Its numbers, if not equal, were now not vastly inferior to our own. So, abandoning his project of a stealthy raid, he determined openly to challenge our command of the high seas.

II

The epic struggle which ended at Trafalgar was a crowning vindication of the British Navy's confidence. Its earlier stages, during the period of blockade, were perhaps a more searching test than the battle itself; and none but the toughest of tough sailors could have survived that long ordeal. Before the final voyage, which carried him to victory, Nelson was continuously at sea for two whole years,

and during those years he left his ship but thrice and for less than an hour each time. Collingwood's ships were out for twenty-two months on end without ever dropping anchor; and when we consider the conditions of the service, the closeness of the quarters, and the hardness of the fare, we may well marvel what manner of men these sailors were that stood it. Often they were the off-scourings of the nation, criminals released from the jails, or men caught by the press-gang and sent as lads unwillingly to sea. Once on board they were subjected to a stern and even barbarous discipline, scourgings with the cat, confinement in iron shackles, or, at worst, the inhuman punishment of "keel-hauling".¹ Hardened beyond belief, they learnt to endure untold privations and agonies of pain, the most primitive surgery without an anæsthetic, operations which make the very blood run cold. Brutalised they doubtless were; but from brutes they were transformed to patriots and heroes by the inspiration of their captains' genius and devotion. Lord St. Vincent had now retired to the Admiralty Office; but there were still afloat many as great as he; one greater. There was Collingwood, of whom Thackeray declared that "nature had never made a better gentleman," and who, on the morning of Trafalgar, put on light shoes instead of heavy sea-boots, because they were "so much more manageable for the surgeon". — There was Cornwallis of bulldog-like tenacity, known better in the service as "Blue Billy," because, as soon as ever his squadron got to port, he ran up the blue signal to make ready again for sea. Above all, there was Nelson himself—now Viscount Nelson—a frail, meagre figure of a man, with a womanish cast about his features and the lithe limbs of a boy, yet winning, by virtue of these very qualities, a kind of tender awe and half-superstitious reverence from the rough, hulking tars among whom he daily moved. This idol of the Navy was a strange mixture of different qualities. His nature combined in an extraordinary degree cool

¹ The victim of this brutal punishment was dragged under water by a rope passed down one side of the ship and up the other—a process not unlikely to prove fatal.

subtlety of intellect with hot emotions. His private life was marred by a romantic passion for a beautiful lady who was not his wife; his public life was one long sacrifice to the call of arduous duty. His constitution, naturally weak and further enfeebled by the loss of an arm and an eye, made him an easy prey to sea-sickness and various disorders of the nerves, which kept him often confined to his own cabin; yet, when the enemy was sighted and the shots began to fly, his eager spirit triumphed and he was at once himself again, excitable and radiant as a child. In the close tactics of battle, and when he had decided to engage, he was a furious fighter, bold to the very verge of recklessness; yet, in the wider strategy of a campaign, he shaped his plans by the most scientific use of information, and the dispositions which ensured his final triumph were the fruit of long and anxious labour of the brain. Happily he was backed at home by men who knew both how to trust and how to use him. First, at the Admiralty was the aged chief, Lord Barham, eighty years old, yet as clear-headed an organiser of victory as though he had been a young man in his prime. Secondly, there was Pitt, now at length, in June of 1804, restored to his old post. It was high time. Addington, the incompetent Minister who had displaced him shortly before the Amiens Treaty, was useless at such a crisis as now threatened; and, in the coming grapple with Napoleon's fiercest onslaught, the nation could at least rest satisfied with the exchange and feel confident that the men on whom its destiny now hung were the best available.

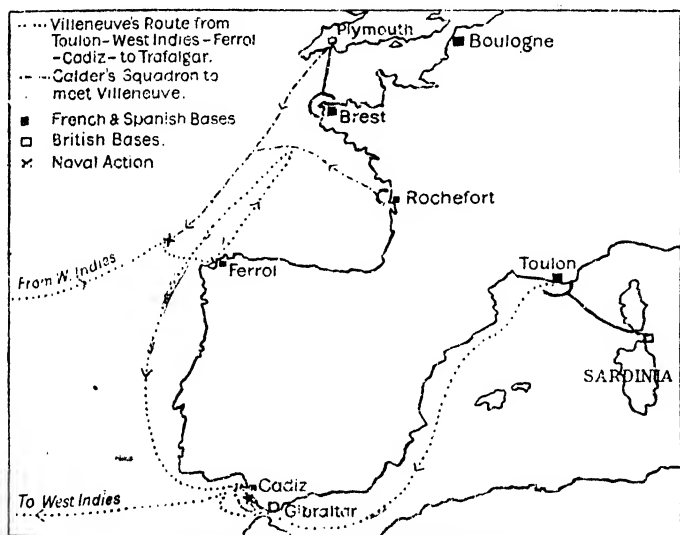
When at the outset of the year 1804 Napoleon decided to challenge our supremacy at sea, there was one obvious preliminary on which depended the very foundation of success. The squadrons of his fleet were widely scattered at many different bases; and, until these various squadrons were united, nothing effectual could possibly be done. It was therefore essential for two or more of them to regain the liberty of movement so far denied them by our sentinels; and throughout the passage of this year Napoleon pressed scheme after scheme upon his admirals for the

purpose of eluding the blockade. In some a hitch occurred and marred them almost before they were conceived ; some were indefinitely postponed ; others frustrated by the English fleet. All came to nothing ; and at the close of 1804 Napoleon seemed as far away as ever from achieving the junction he desired. At the turn of the year, however, an important new factor came to his assistance. Spain, although nominally Napoleon's ally, had hitherto refrained from joining in the war ; but now, insulted by our seizure of her treasure-ships, she yielded to his pressure ; her fleet became henceforth an extra pawn for him to play with ; and, with this valuable addition to his strength, the game entered a new phase.

In order properly to appreciate Napoleon's naval strategy for 1805, it is essential to grasp well the disposition of the French and Spanish fleets. To begin our survey in the north, there was first of all at Brest the main French concentration under Admiral Ganteaume. Watching him, and based on Plymouth, was Cornwallis with the main British squadron. Cornwallis's blockade had been continuously maintained since the May of 1803. It was equally maintained throughout the whole of 1805 : and the real failure of Napoleon's plan resulted from the fact that it was never broken. If Ganteaume had got out, our ships might for a brief space have been drawn out of the Channel ; the Boulogne flotilla, loaded with the Army of Invasion, might have put out to sea ; and the campaign have moved to a very different ending. Despite, however, all his efforts to escape, Ganteaume remained in Brest. South of Brest, there were small fleets at Rochefort, Ferrol, and Cadiz, the last two mainly Spanish. These also were blockaded, though less effectually, by British ships. Finally, in the Gulf of Lyons, there was a considerable French squadron at Toulon under Admiral Villeneuve. This Nelson had been watching since the beginning of the war ; but in these more distant waters an equally close blockade was quite impossible ; and opportunities were certain to arise for Villeneuve to escape. Napoleon now intended that he should, and planned that simultaneously Ganteaume should break from

Brest, and the two effect a junction in the far Atlantic. This second part of the scheme Cornwallis foiled; and Ganteaume was, as we have said, held tight. On 29th March, however, Villeneuve got away out of Toulon, picked up a Spanish squadron at Cadiz, and made off to the West Indies (whither, in point of fact, the Rochefort squadron had already sailed, but, failing to fall in with him, put back). The West Indies, for commercial and other reasons, were a weak spot in Britain's armour; and Villeneuve's feint at them (for it was no more than that) was shrewdly planned. He expected the British to follow him; and sure enough they did. For a while, indeed, though fully aware of the Toulon fleet's escape, Nelson was completely in the dark about its destination. He ranged the Mediterranean anxiously in search, at last picked up the news from passing vessels, and followed across the Atlantic upon Villeneuve's tracks. His ships made better going than the Frenchman's, and by early June he was out among the islands, and not a hundred miles distant from his quarry. False information, however, threw him off the scent, and presently he heard to his intense disgust that Villeneuve had doubled back, and was making tracks for home—making, that is, for Ganteaume and the Channel, and *he had five days' start*. It was now a race against time which should arrive the first in European waters, Nelson or Villeneuve; but with admirable foresight Nelson sent ahead a fast light brig to warn the authorities of the impending danger. The brig arrived in time; a squadron under Calder was at once made ready, and dispatched to intercept Villeneuve's returning fleet. Calder fell in with it in misty weather, and fought an indecisive action somewhere in the Bay, then weakly withdrew (for which he was afterwards court-martialled) and allowed Villeneuve's ships to make Ferrol. They were thoroughly exhausted after their double ocean voyage; but Napoleon, seeing himself within a touch of victory, ordered them out of Ferrol to the Channel mouth. It was now or never for a junction with Ganteaume. Ganteaume was ready and waiting; but Cornwallis, as we

may guess, was ready too; and at the sight of his ships upon the skyline poor Villeneuve lost all nerve. He turned south again in a panic of fear and trembling and ran into Cadiz. The great game was up, and Napoleon himself knew it. Other plans took possession of his nimble brain. Within a week or two, the great camp on Boulogne hill was broken up; the Army of Invasion was ordered off upon a very different errand; and the grand project of sea-victory



THE CAMPAIGN OF TRAFALGAR.

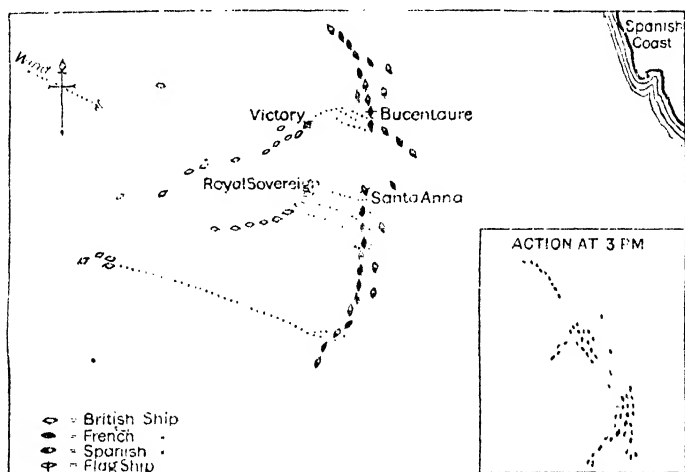
was forgotten—from the moment when it failed. The seal was to be set upon its failure by the hand of Nelson himself. But the prime author of its failure, if one may be singled out, was the man who throughout these days of anxious crisis had held inviolate the keys of Brest—Cornwallis.

Meanwhile, with a true sailor's instinct for returning to his post, Nelson had made back for the Mediterranean. At Gibraltar he learnt the news—how the enemy he sought had been duly met and countered—and with that he put

home for England. Less than a month later, on 15th September, he was once more embarking on the "Victory" at Portsmouth. "Many were in tears," says Southey, as he went on board; and Nelson himself felt a strange presentiment that he would never more return. On reaching Lisbon, he learnt that Villeneuve's fleet, which still formed his main objective, was lying safely ensconced in Cadiz harbour, watched rather than blockaded by Collingwood's four ships. Had it remained in harbour, the battle of Trafalgar would never have been fought; but Napoleon, spitefully indignant, as a pettish child, over the failure of his plans, was taunting the admiral with cowardice, and egging him on at least to show a fight; and at last, on 19th October, news came to Nelson near Gibraltar straits that the enemy were out. He at once moved up the coast to within touch. At dawn on the 21st the enemy were sighted, moving along shore in a southerly direction. At ten o'clock they changed their tack, and began to double back northward towards Cadiz. They were formed in a long line, bent slightly horse-shoe fashion; and they numbered, including both French and Spanish, thirty-three ships of the line. Though Nelson could muster but twenty-seven in all, he showed not the slightest hesitation to engage. His plan, should such an opportunity be offered him, had long been formed; and, though great controversy has raged around the subject, there can now be no doubt whatever that the plan's main outline was very closely followed in the battle which ensued. This plan, the "Nelson touch," was an adaptation of Rodney's old manœuvre, the breaking of the line; only on this occasion the line was to be broken not at one point, but at two. "If I break through in two places," a Spanish novelist¹ makes Nelson say, "and if I put the part between the two places between two fires, I shall grab every stick of it;" and that is almost precisely what he did. With this object in view his ships were divided into two separate columns. One, led by Collingwood in his ship the "Royal Sovereign," broke through the tail of the French line, and by noon en-

¹ Quoted by Fitchett, whose narrative, together with Sir H. Newbolt's, is the most readable and picturesque of the stories of Trafalgar.

gaged it closely. Half an hour later, the other column, headed by the "Victory" herself, struck home about the centre. Thus, while the rear and middle of his line were struggling for dear life, Villeneuve's van was left completely out of action, and before it could wear round upon the battle, the battle had been turned to a defeat. Except that the engagement bunched into two main knots in rear and centre, it resolved itself from the first into a "pell-mell fight". As ship laid up by ship, there ensued a furious



THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR.

duel, maintained at such close quarters that at times boarding became an actual possibility; and some French and Spanish gunners even closed their lower ports for fear the British tars might find an entrance. Meanwhile, the broadsides belched forth shot and flame. Timbers were ripped to splinters; masts went by the board; rigging was torn to tatters. Collingwood's "Royal Sovereign" compelled the Spanish flag-ship to surrender; but was itself so seriously disabled that it had to be towed out of the line. The "Victory" likewise first engaged the "Bucentaure," which was flying Villeneuve's flag; then ran so close against

the "Redoutable" that the rigging became locked. It was during this encounter that a French sharp-shooter in the mizzen-top picked out Lord Nelson's figure. The ball penetrated in the region of the spine; and Nelson was carried to the cock-pit. "I am a dead man," he told Hardy, the favourite of his captains; "thank God I have done my duty." News came to him that fifteen of the enemy had struck. "That is well," he answered, "but I had bargained for twenty." Then, with a last thought for the fleet under his charge, he warned them they must anchor; for a gale was rising. Meantime, the French van had at length swung round and entered on the action; but its assistance came too late, and soon it too was scattered in the general rout. Some of the enemy went north, some south; but on the heaving water, among the British ships, many lay broken and dismasted, able to move no more. Desultory firing continued till 4.30. Then, as the news of victory was reported to Lord Nelson, the cannonade died down; and to the sound of the parting salvoes the great spirit passed away in the hour of his triumph.

Such was the final issue of the grand project of invasion. But Napoleon had, as always, two bolts in his quiver, and he used the second now. During the previous spring Pitt, nothing daunted by earlier discouragements, had been working hard to form another league of European Powers. The invitation was well-timed; the Powers had now better reason, even than before, for fearing French aggression; for, bad as a revolutionary Republic had once seemed, a militarist Dictator was infinitely worse; and in the summer of 1805, while Nelson was chasing Villeneuve to and fro on the Atlantic, Austria, Russia, and England had once again joined hands in the third and last of Pitt's great coalitions. Yet, as it proved, had Napoleon himself prayed for it, nothing more opportune than this event could have been vouchsafed to him. Here at last in Central Europe, if not across the Channel, his Grand Army of Invasion might find work to do, and failure at sea could quickly be redressed by victory on land; all that was needed was a swift and sudden blow

before the Coalition had leisure to prepare; and for swift-ness, stunning in its series of ruthless hammer-strokes, the campaign now to be witnessed has never been surpassed. On 15th August Villeneuve turned back from his attempt to join Ganteaume off Brest. Ten days later, seeing the game was up, Napoleon determined on the new plan of operations. The Grand Army left Boulogne, and, while Nelson was on the way to his culminating triumph, Napoleon was already marching on the Rhine. By 21st October, the very day of Trafalgar, he had reached the upper Danube, surrounded one Austrian army under General Mack and compelled it to capitulate at Ulm. By the middle of November he was in Vienna, and on 2nd December, after three short months of marching, he had shattered Austria's last hope and a force of allied Russians on the field of Austerlitz. Southern Europe lay at his feet; yet his work was but half done. The King of Prussia, impudently posing as a second Frederic without possessing a tithe of Frederic's powers, had determined to oppose Napoleon's progress, and had joined the Coalition's diminished ranks. That winter, spring, and summer Napoleon waited, giving his army a much-needed rest; then in the autumn of 1806 he sprang his full weight on Prussia, overwhelmed her forces at Auerstadt and Jena on the self-same day, and finally, marching his army up the Baltic coast through Poland, compelled the Russian Tsar to sue for peace. On a raft, moored in mid-stream of the frontier river Niemen, the two great monarchs met, and there they arranged between them, as though the best of friends, to divide the continent. By the Treaty of Tilsit the old frontiers were redrawn. Prussia was shorn of half her provinces. Poland went part to Russia; part became a vassal-state to France. Meanwhile in central Europe Napoleon already reigned supreme, and Austria had paid dearly for defeat. For what it was worth (and it was worth but little now) the nominal control of Germany was taken from her. Unlamented and unmissed, after its thousand years of history, the Holy Roman Empire ceased to be. In its place was formed the great "Confederation of the

Rhine," a vast regrouping of the German States, organised on the model of French law, and governed wholly at the dictate of Napoleon's will. Like a second Cæsar, he "bestrode the narrow world like a Colossus," and the uncomfortable memory of Trafalgar had, to all intents and purposes, been wiped out. Within a year of being driven off the water Napoleon had become indisputable master of the land, and England found herself in very deed alone. When the news of Austerlitz came through to London, Pitt had seen in a flash the meaning of that blow. "Roll up the map of Europe," he exclaimed, "it will not be wanted these ten years"; and, though he turned in bitterness of spirit to gather up the broken threads of his diplomacy, the strength he had so lavishly expended in his country's cause was failing fast. Broken-hearted, he took to his bed, and in a few weeks' time was gone. "O my country! How I leave my country!" were the last words he uttered, and in the black days which followed they found a tragic echo in many English hearts. Sorer need had indeed never fallen on his country; but there was no other Pitt.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PENINSULAR WAR AND LEIPSIC

WITH the collapse of Prussia and his consequent domination of all northern Europe Napoleon's struggle against Britain entered a new phase; and between this second phase and the first phase just concluded there is at once a striking similarity and a no less striking difference. The first phase had consisted of a plan—the project of invasion; of a reverse—Trafalgar—which shattered that plan to atoms; of a recovery, swift as it was complete—the campaigns of Austerlitz and Jena. The second phase was similar in its initial stages, very different in its last. It too began with a plan for humbling Britain—the “Continental System”; that plan, like the other, broke under British pressure—the work of Wellington in the Peninsula. Then the luck turned; the recovery which Napoleon sought, fickle destiny denied him, and his strength, first wasted among Russian snows, was challenged by the armies of indignant Europe and overwhelmed conclusively at Leipsic. A brief interval, and there was still to follow the last phase—the escape from Elba and the campaign of Waterloo.

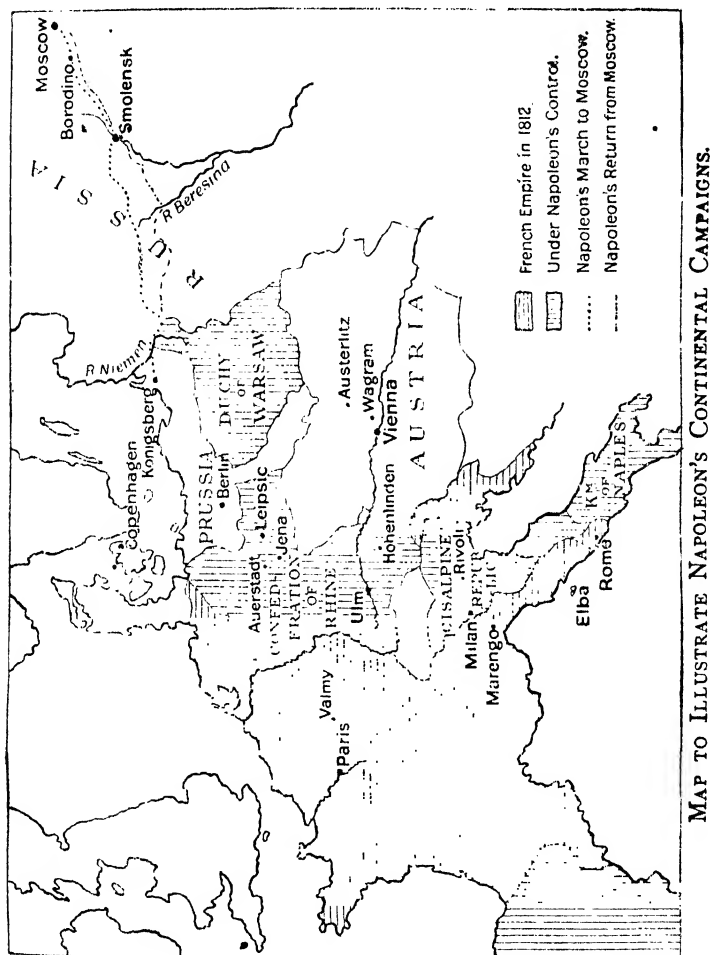
I

After Jena in 1806 Napoleon had, so to speak, the continent to play with. There was not a country (except Russia, with which he was soon to deal) that was not either his subject or his ally; he could levy black-mail upon all to get money or supplies; and with such unlimited resources at his back he turned to settle his account with England.

It was not, however, Bonaparte the general, but Napoleon the statesman that we now had most to fear. His subtle brain was weaving a new scheme for our undoing. He saw that this "nation of shopkeepers" was first and last dependent on its trade, and that, although unable to defeat our navy, he might still hope to defeat our mercantile marine. So in November, 1806, the word went forth to Europe in the so-called "Berlin Decrees" that the trade of England was placed under a ban. Henceforth no commerce, no traffic, not even private letters, might pass between England and the ports of all such countries as Napoleon had the power or title to control; this, according to his own interpretation, meant every state in Europe, and England was, in short, to be cut off from the whole world.¹ Now, a blockade to be effectual must be rigidly complete, and a single leakage was alone sufficient to defeat Napoleon's plan. Nor, as it proved, was such a leakage easy to prevent. English merchandise was smuggled through by mercenary Dutchmen and transported on the sly to Germany; other goods were, with equal secrecy, smuggled back to us. Then, too, there were many countries that suffered even more severely than we did ourselves from the stoppage of supplies; these raised indignant protest at the sacrifice demanded, and the sight of food-stuffs wantonly destroyed because they hailed from England was enough to goad many a hungry crowd to fury. Little, however, did Napoleon care. He meant to starve England to submission, even if France herself were starving first, and, since the "Continental System" was the only instrument he had of accomplishing his purpose, he was resolved to use it to the bitter end. And, indeed, ere long the "Continental System" had grown to all appearances most dangerously complete. By 1807 there was not a State in Europe which dared openly,

¹ Napoleon's own short-sightedness was equally to blame for the ultimate failure of the blockade. According to the old-fashioned economic theory, which he followed, it was to his advantage to ship French corn to England in return for English gold, because, by this transaction, the enemy country would, so he thought, be gradually impoverished. To this theory he adhered despite all warnings from his best advisers, and by so doing he materially assisted us to escape starvation.

at least, to defy his orders. Upon Russia, like the Philistia of the Psalmist, he had triumphed signally. Prussia was



his "wash-pot"; over Austria he had "cast his shoe". His relatives and captains had been given royal crowns in a

dozen subject countries. One brother, Louis, was made King of Holland; another, Joseph, was made King of Naples; to a third, Jérôme, Westphalia was allotted. His step-son was Viceroy of Italy. Murat, his brother-in-law, had a little German duchy of his own. Bernadotte, Berthier, his marshals, and Talleyrand had each his petty State. Europe, in fact, had become a family preserve; and wherever England turned in her despair the name of Bonaparte was written ominously across her path. One country, however, has not as yet been mentioned—the peninsula Spain; and Spain was, in fact, to prove the crux of the whole situation and the rock on which Napoleon's scheme would ultimately break.

It was in the spring of 1808 that Napoleon decided that Spain, though she was already his obsequious ally, must be brought more closely still beneath his grip. The method he devised was characteristic of the man. He first induced the aged Spanish monarch to arrest his son, Prince Ferdinand, for treason and to put the unfortunate young man in jail; then, when the people rose in Ferdinand's support, he got the old man to abdicate and, without the shadow of a title, *appointed his own brother, Joseph Bonaparte, to take possession of the vacant throne.* French troops were sent to occupy Madrid; and, when the Spanish rose in protest, they were ruthlessly shot down. In a twinkling the whole country was in arms; bands of irregular "guerillas" gathered on every hand; and the new King Joseph had no sooner occupied his capital than he was forced to quit. The fact was that Napoleon had put his hand into a hornets' nest. Spain was a nation in a sense in which Germany, Austria, and Italy were not; and, in attempting to foist his nominee upon the Spanish throne, he was tampering with the independence of a proud and ancient race. If, therefore, the Peninsula was to be conquered, it could not be done by a few lightning marches or by a few spectacular triumphs in the field, but only by the slow and arduous process of wearing the national resistance down. It was Spain, in short, that gave Napoleon his first serious check; and, if danger

threatened England from this monstrous usurpation, in it lay also England's opportunity.

II

After Pitt's death, in the first weeks of 1806, there had been no fit successor to occupy his place. A Whig Government was formed, known as the "Ministry of all the Talents," yet sadly deficient in the one talent needful for prosecuting war. After the manner of Whigs, they sought peace and ensued it; but Napoleon was in no mood to grant them their desire. The Continental System was his only answer; and soon the "Ministry of all the Talents" grew tired of the attempt. Fox, their most brilliant and hard-working member, died; and in the spring of 1807 they gave way to a Tory Government, of which the nominal leader was the Duke of Portland, but in which the real ability belonged to Canning, the Foreign Minister, and Castlereagh, the Secretary for War. The new Government set to work with creditable vigour to defeat, if possible, Napoleon's schemes. Blockade was answered by blockade; and, by the "Orders in Council," they sternly refused the entry of Napoleon's ports to all shipping, both of neutrals and of belligerents alike. This was, of course, a serious blow to France and Europe; for the British Navy was a more effective instrument of blockade than all the Emperor's manifestoes. But its effect was double-edged; for by the inconvenience which it caused to neutrals we made new enemies, and, in 1812, the American Republic was actually driven to declaring war upon us. Meanwhile the Tory Government had not remained content with a purely maritime activity. Our military resources were not adequate, indeed, to challenge the enemy decisively on land; nor, such as they were, were they very skilfully handled. As in the earlier war against the Revolution, there was too much dissipation of our forces. One expedition was sent, in 1807, to coerce the Turkish Sultan. Another was sent to Walcheren in 1809 to destroy the Antwerp docks. Both failed to serve the smallest useful purpose; and both occupied troops which were needed infinitely more

elsewhere. But, in the long run, our politicians came to realise that Spain was our most profitable sphere of action. The national resistance which Napoleon had there evoked gave us an ally that we sought elsewhere in vain. Portugal, our friend by old treaty and tradition, offered an excellent starting-point for operations; and from August of 1808, when our first troops landed near Lisbon, until 1813, when the French were driven finally from Spain, our main efforts were rightly concentrated upon the task of rescuing the Peninsula from Napoleon's grasp.

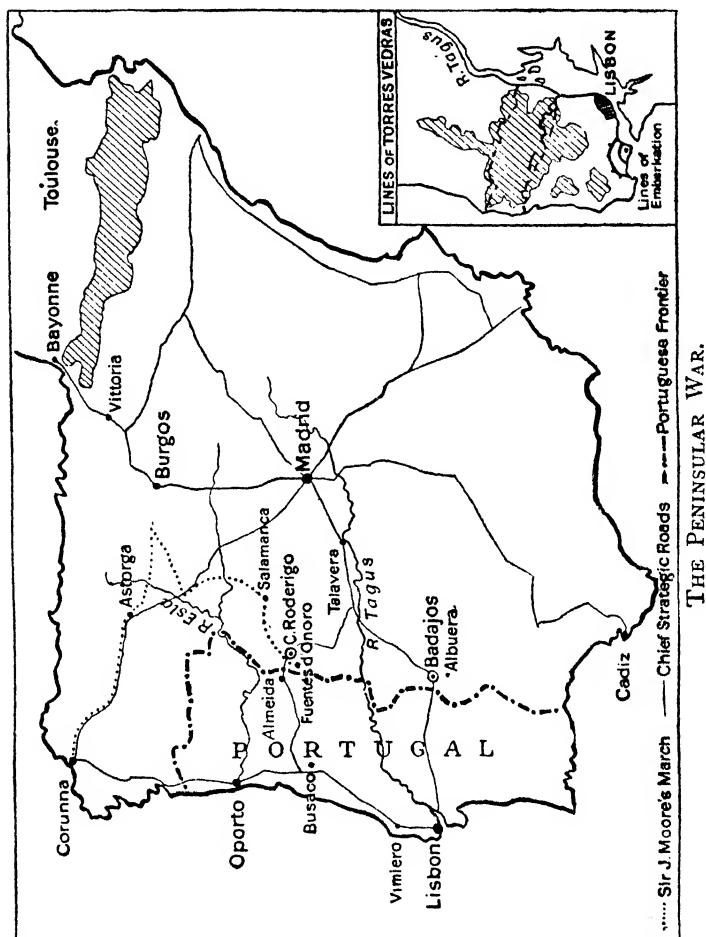
It was not, however, to the army at home that the chief credit of our ultimate success was due. The army, like the navy, discovered the process of the war. It was nearly finished when the English regiments had won particular distinction on the battle-field; but the prolonged ordeal it was now to undergo revealed once more, as in the days of Wolfe and Marlborough, the indomitable genius of a fighting race. At the outset of the war good leadership was rare, for promotion went too much by influence. But there were many officers, none the less, worthy of the best traditions of the service, cool in battle, dogged in defeat, full of kindly consideration for the rank and file, and, above all, perfect gentlemen—men, for instance, such as Sir John Moore, the soul of honour and the type of chivalry, or the two Napier brothers, Charles and William the famous historian of the war, or Sir Arthur Wellesley, himself destined, when all was over, to win his more familiar title as Duke of Wellington, but now freshly home from India, where he had helped to defeat Tippoo and had won his own great triumph over the Mahrattas at Assaye. The rank and file were socially of the same stamp as the sailors. They were recruited for long terms of voluntary enlistment, and, since the rates of pay were miserably low, few but the poorest and the ne'er-do-wells were attracted to the service.¹ The raw material which composed the regiments

¹ Castlereagh, however, improved on a new system introduced by Pitt, whereby a militia was formed, raised by compulsory ballot for home service, but also used in 1808 and onwards to feed the battalions at the front.

that won at Waterloo were described by Wellington himself as the "scum of the earth". Weedy, ill-fed lads marched side by side with worn-out veterans; all swore, and drank, and gambled in the most thorough-going fashion. Thieving was a part of the profession; and, though Wellington forbade it, loot was still the chief attraction of campaigns. Yet here too, as in the navy, discipline produced incredible results. Men learnt to advance as coolly to a shot-swept breach as to a church parade. They learnt to receive a charge of cavalry upon their bayonets without the tremor of a muscle. More difficult still, when the enemy's round-shot came plunging towards their ranks, visible to the eye and often bounding like a cricket-ball along the surface of the ground, they learnt to stand immovable as statues, forbidden even to step from the shot's way, though its merest blow would shatter limbs like touch-wood. The firing drill was carried to a high efficiency. Their "Brown Bess" muskets were still loaded at the muzzle, the powder, ball, and wadding rammed home with a long stick, the priming for the flint-lock poured out of a flask. Yet so quickly was this done that a trained man could fire two shots a minute; and, to increase the rate, the ranks fired their volleys in relays, one standing, the other dropped upon one knee. As a rule, fire was reserved for an exceedingly short range, and often the soldiers waited till the white of the enemies' eyes was clearly seen, then loosed their volley and followed with the bayonet. Besides unusual courage, the most incredible endurance was demanded of these men. Their equipment was of the rudest; their boots and clothing were reduced to shreds and tatters and could seldom be replaced. Camp kitchens were, as yet, a luxury. Field hospitals there were none. Yet, under these conditions, our men managed somehow or other to survive and, what is more, to beat the troops of the best general of the world out of the peninsula of Spain. But it took six years of bitter suffering before the job was done.

When, in the summer of 1808, the French armies began to arrive across the Pyrenees, the task awaiting them was by

no means so easy as it seemed. They arrived in immense numbers, and, before he had finished, Napoleon poured



troops by the hundred thousand into this devastating theatre of war. But big battalions alone could not buy victory.

The enemy was of the most insidious kind. The scattered bands of peasants, which might melt and scatter into the hills at a regiment's approach, would re-form next day in the valley on the farther side; and the French hold could never be secure or permanent, except in those districts where their troops were actually engaged. In such a country, too, mere numbers were a positive encumbrance. It was the usual practice of Napoleon's armies to live upon the land in which they found themselves. But Spain is a barren country, parched, sterile, waterless. The roads were vile or more often non-existent; the peasants were always on the watch to cut communications; it was impossible to concentrate more than a portion of Napoleon's troops on any given point; and the problem of commissariat proved from first to last the crux of the campaign. Widely different was the task which confronted Wellington when, a few weeks later, he disembarked his troops a little north of Lisbon, inflicted a severe defeat on the French at Vimiero and, having forced them, under the "Convention of Cintra," to evacuate the whole of Portugal, himself proceeded to occupy the capital and to organise at leisure for the coming campaign. Lisbon, with its port upon the Tagus, was a first-rate base. Into it British ships could pour supplies with no fear of interruption; and (except through the incompetence of home authorities) Wellington was not likely to be so much troubled by the commissariat problem. As a set-off to this, however, the force at his disposal was ridiculously small. The Portuguese and Spanish "regulars" were at first such undependable allies that he would almost have been better off without them; and, against Napoleon's myriads, he had of British troops no more at the outset than thirteen thousand men. Wellington's position, in fact, was like that of a pigmy fighting with his back to the water against a band of underfed giants, but aided in the unequal combat by a swarm of stinging gnats, the source of constant annoyance and confusion to his foe. The Englishman's one hope of victory lay therefore in a policy of wearing his opponents out. To attempt to reconquer Spain against such

odds was, in the early stages, far beyond his dreams. The best course open to him was to attract against himself the largest possible number of Napoleon's troops, and, having thus drawn away the garrisons from the outlying districts, to leave the local peasantry to do the rest ; and this is precisely what was done. If Wellington advanced, it was to draw the French. If he retreated, it was equally to draw the French. The conditions of the country and the climate helped him ; and little by little the strength of Napoleon's army was sapped and drained away by the dogged persistence of the Englishman. "It was the Spanish ulcer," Napoleon afterwards confessed, "which was the cause of my undoing".

The first phase in the perilous game of drawing the enemy consisted of two bold dashes out of Portugal into the French "Tom Tiddler's Ground"—one made by Sir John Moore, the other by Wellington himself. The terms of the Truce of Cintra had been most displeasing to the authorities in London, who would have dearly liked to see the whole French army made prisoners then and there ; and Wellington had accordingly been summoned away home to face a court of enquiry. During his absence, Sir John Moore, who had just arrived in Portugal with reinforcements, was given command over the British troops ; and towards the end of October he ventured out of Lisbon and took the road north-eastward into Spain. About the same time, as it so happened, Napoleon himself had appeared on the scene. He scattered the Spanish armies easily, marched on Madrid, which his nervous brother Joseph had previously evacuated, and thence planned to strike at Lisbon and the south of Spain. The hour was critical. Unless instant steps were taken, the annihilating force of the French numbers would drive the British back into the sea, overrun the whole length and breadth of the peninsula, and occupy its precious southern ports. Some bold stroke was clearly needed to divert them ; and on such a stroke Moore immediately resolved. He was already half-way towards the Spanish capital when the French were entering it, and it struck him that the long communications between Madrid and the

French frontier were in reality Napoleon's most tender spot. A threat at the great high road leading through Burgos to Bayonne would upset the enemy's whole calculations. It was December, and the mountain passes were already choked with snow, when Napoleon heard with mingled amusement and concern that the tiny British army, barely twenty thousand strong, was cutting in upon his north and had already reached a point within fifty miles of his main communications. Despite the bitter weather, Napoleon lost no time. He ordered Soult, who was posted in that district, to close in upon Moore's rear; then, with fifty thousand troops under his own command, he took the hill road leading from Madrid into the north. Through snow, which threatened at moments to engulf his army, he pushed on at lightning pace; in five days' marching he covered a hundred miles; and, fancying that the British were still clinging to their purpose, he considered them safely in the trap. But Moore had got wind of the approaching menace; his task was already accomplished, and he swiftly turned upon his tracks. At Corunna, on the north-west coast, supplies and transports were awaiting him; and without more ado he swung round and began retreating for dear life to this new base. It was not a moment too soon; and, even as things were, he came within an ace of being caught. Soult and Napoleon were both after him; and when he forded the river Esla, now swollen with torrential rains and melted snow, he was barely thirty-six hours to the good. On the last day of the year he passed Astorga, and on the first day of 1809 the French entered on his heels. Here at last, however, Napoleon recognised his failure, and, himself retiring, left Soult to continue the chase. Outside Corunna Moore turned on his pursuers; and, though his troops' moral was sorely shaken by the horrors of the march, they flung back the enemy with heavy loss. Moore himself fell mortally wounded in the battle; but, before he died, he knew the French were beaten and that his own army would undoubtedly be able to make good their escape by sea.

Moore's stroke had given Spain some respite; but with

the winter months the process of French conquest was gradually resumed ; and when, in the late spring of 1809, Wellington himself returned to Lisbon, he found the enemy closing in on Portugal from every side. The counter blow which he now undertook to deliver was directed towards Madrid, straight up the Tagus valley, one of the few routes by which it was possible to lead an army into Spain. A strong French force, under the Marshal Victor, was stationed in this valley ; but, taking a large though undisciplined contingent of Spanish regulars along with him, Wellington moved out to the attack. He met Victor near the town of Talavera, more than half-way to Madrid, and there gave battle on the 27th of July. Here, as throughout the war, the tactical formations adopted by the British and the French were of widely different types. The French made it their habit to attack in a solid column, composed of nine, eighteen, or even twenty-four successive ranks, and intended to force its way, wedge-like, by sheer weight of brute numbers. The British, on the other hand, whose tactics were usually defensive, were drawn out in a long thin line, as a rule but two ranks deep. The wider extension of their front gave them the great advantage of an outflanking fire ; and skilful choice of ground (in which Wellington was an adept) enabled them by the discharge of rapid volleys to contain the enemy's rush. Their position at Talavera was admirably selected. Wellington's troops stretched well across the valley, resting their left flank on some rising ground ; the Spanish force, however, on which they depended for the support of their right wing, proved a very broken reed, and its cantankerous old general, Don Gregorio Cuesta, did his best to lose the battle. Luckily the French, instead of pressing their assault upon this vital flank, directed their chief onslaught against the British lines, and broke themselves against the hill on which it stood. It was the hardest-fought fight, so Wellington declared, known within modern times. All through two days the issue hung in the balance. The hill was taken and retaken. Attacks and counter-attacks followed in quick succession ; and, even

when night fell, the French continued to push forward through the darkness. On the third morning "King" Joseph, who was present in person at the battle, called off his shattered troops and began a retreat in the direction of Madrid. But, though master of the field, Wellington could make no further use of his advantage, as Soult was threatening the Tagus valley in his rear; and, barely in time, he fell back on Portugal once more.

With this retirement the British strategy enters its second phase. Our handful of troops had drawn the enemy—drawn him with a vengeance. Our task now was to keep him occupied. All that winter, and on into next spring, Wellington played his favourite game of a vigorous defensive, as few but he could play it. And, sure enough, Napoleon fell into the trap. Sending off Soult to terrorise the south, he selected Massena as his most capable commander, picked out his choicest troops, and about mid-summer of 1810 loosed them upon Portugal with orders to "drive the British leopard into the sea". But Wellington was ready with his plan—a plan of which Massena had as yet no inkling. As the enemy marched against him down the north-east road, he at first fell slowly back, then, picking his position carefully, turned to give battle at Busaco. The bulk of the British troops were skilfully concealed behind a swell of rising ground, and the French storming the hill in reckless confidence lost four men killed and wounded to every one of ours. Then again Wellington fell back; and Massena, again pressing on in hot pursuit, found himself suddenly in a desert. The inhabitants had been removed wholesale; the live-stock had disappeared; the farmyards stood empty; even the crops had been destroyed. And the French army, which counted as usual on supporting life upon the country-side, was soon reduced to the shortest of short commons. Still Wellington fell back, and still Massena followed, until, when a point was reached some twenty miles from Lisbon, he realised at last the nature of the British stratagem. The town of Lisbon lies at the southern tip of a broad peninsula, flanked upon one side

by the Tagus estuary and on the other by the sea. Here for six months past the British engineers had been at work, and with the assistance of the local peasantry had constructed a triple line of stout defences. No pains had been spared to make the lines complete. At weak points stone walls were built over thirty feet in height. Whole woods had been felled to furnish barricades; roads had been broken up and rivers dammed. Yet to the French the very existence of these celebrated Lines of Torres Vedras came as an utter surprise. On the peninsula behind them Wellington's men now settled down securely, fed by the port of Lisbon at their back and ready to rally quickly to any threatened point. The French on the other hand were in a quandary. They could hope to make but small impression on these formidable works; yet to retreat they dared not. So they sat down doggedly to await further reinforcements. For six whole weeks they waited, enduring a slow starvation. Foraging parties were sent back to scour the country in their rear; but these returned as often as not with empty hands; and, under the stress of famine, deserters crossed in large numbers to the British lines. It was a hopeless struggle, not so much with man as with human nature itself. For a while Messena kept his hungry soldiers wonderfully in hand; but in the middle of November he accepted the inevitable and fell back again towards Spain.

So the third phase begins. The tide has turned; and the hour has at length arrived for the advance. From now until the day when the French armies were driven finally from Spain, it took just on three years; but they were years of continuous, though at first of painful, progress; and from the spring of 1811 Wellington was the attacker rather than the attacked. This change was due in the main to two new factors, both of which, as time went on, became more and more decisive. In the first place, the French energy began to flag. Their men were stale and sick with deferred hope. Their effort under Soult, though it overran the south, had been definitely checked before Cadiz. The peasants still

waged a truceless war on their communications; and the task before them appeared interminable. As for Napoleon himself, he had lost interest in a struggle of which he had long since relinquished personal command. Wars in Central Europe (of which more shall be said soon) had distracted his attention; and now, in 1811, the colossal project of invading Russia had caused him to withdraw his best regiments from Spain. On the other hand, the troops at Wellington's command were increasing and improving. The Portuguese army, led and trained by our great Irish soldier, Viscount Beresford, was now in excellent trim. The Spanish regulars were numerous; and the old cause of friction was permanently removed when in 1812 Wellington was given the command-in-chief of the whole allied army. Unhappily, however, though the home authorities were now giving him a far more vigorous backing, actual reinforcements from England were still few and far between; and, since the French had still three hundred thousand men in the peninsula, the task ahead of Wellington was anything but easy. Skilful strategy alone enabled him to triumph in the end. Possessing as he did the "interior lines," he could strike out from Portugal at his own chosen point; and, by a clever disposition of his commissariat depots, he maintained a freedom of action and a bold initiative, which the French were no longer in a position to resist.

When, at the end of the year 1810, the enemy fell back from the Torres Vedras lines, success seemed still far distant. Though Portugal indeed was saved, our main task of driving the enemy from the Peninsula was as yet untouched; and the very keys of entry into Spain still rested in French hands. There were but two roads, worthy of that name, which led across the frontier out of Portugal, one north of the Tagus valley and one south. The northern of these routes was covered by two towns, Almeida and the frontier fortress Ciudad Roderigo. The southern route was covered equally by the fort of Badajoz; and, before Wellington could hope to strike an effective blow for Spain's recovery, the recapture of these formidable barrier

posts was an essential step. In 1811, therefore, we find him hammering at Almeida gates. Massena attacks him at Fuentes d'Onoro; is beaten back; and soon Almeida falls. Roderigo, however, is left unreduced. Meanwhile, at Badajoz, a mixed army of allies under Beresford's command is making a similar attempt. Soult comes to the town's relief; and, after a bloody fight at Albuera, in which our own contingent lost a third of its whole number, Soult too is driven back. But, like Roderigo, Badajoz does not fall—this year at least. Better results were awaiting Wellington's endeavours in 1812. He did not wait on time. In the first days of the new year—under strange campaigning weather—he pounced down on Roderigo and, before French reinforcements could appear from winter quarters, took it by fierce assault. Then, making a feint of entry into Spain, he slipped south across the Tagus and fell on Badajoz. To take this second fortress, before relief could come, seemed a mad hope; but by desperate fighting Wellington achieved it. In those days the usual method of assault was first to work forward by a system of zig-zag trenches, then, when the guns had rent a breach in the town-walls, to charge home with the bayonet. All this was normally a lengthy business; but at Badajoz, where the attack of a relief-force was momentarily expected, there was not a moment to be lost; and, after less than two weeks' bombardment, Wellington sent his men against the breach. Owing to lack of ammunition, our guns gave out an hour or so too soon; and the French had time, before the assault came, to patch the broken gaps in their defences with sword-blades fixed in beams and other devilish devices. The result was that, when shortly before midnight the English infantry swept up into the breaches, they found themselves caught in a veritable death-trap. They stumbled and were maimed upon the sword-blades; they were mown down by the defenders' musket fire; they were blown into the air by mines and hand-grenades; and, though they stuck grimly to their midnight work, they could make no headway whatsoever. Of the attacks delivered at five separate

points, four failed to gain a hold. But, by wonderful audacity, the party dispatched against the castle climbed up by ladders and finally obtained a footing within the walls. The French, taken in the rear, gave up the fight; and Badajoz was ours. The carnage at the untaken breaches had been terrible, costing us first and last a full five thousand men. But it was worth the cost; for Wellington now held the keys of entry into Spain.

Wellington did not reap at once the full fruits of his success; but in the year of Badajoz's capture he gave the French a taste of what was coming. As spring turned to summer, he struck out north-east at Salamanca, the enemy's chief store-depot in Upper Spain. A great pitched battle followed, and the greatest so far of our victories was won. Madrid was entered; and for a moment it appeared as though the hour of final triumph had arrived. But, though he pressed on to Burgos, up the Bayonne road, that was the furthest point attained by Wellington this year. French armies were collecting to the town's relief, and he fell back on the Portuguese frontier for the winter months. The next year's strategy was better planned. Wellington had now at his disposal by far the largest force he had yet commanded, over 60,000 Spaniards and 75,000 British and Portuguese; and, though the French still had some 200,000 men in their various scattered armies, we were soon to fight a battle in which for the first time the superiority of numbers was upon our side. The enemy had evacuated southern Spain during the winter; and, falling back upon their communications with Bayonne, their main forces were stretched in a wide line between the Esla and Madrid, when at the end of May Wellington moved out. They soon became aware, however, that the force in front of them was not the only force which they must fear. An English contingent had been shipped round to the north Spanish coast; and, when this threatened to take them in the rearward flank, the French hurriedly fell back. Wellington pursued, caught them, as they turned at bay, before Vittoria, and, after a crushing victory, hunted their broken rabble to

the gates of the Pyrenees. Spain was delivered; it was now the turn of France. In the spring of 1814 we pressed hard against Bayonne, threatened Bordeaux, and on the 10th of April beat Soult out of Toulouse. But, unknown to Wellington, the war was already over. Four days earlier, upon the 6th of April, Napoleon had surrendered his crown.

III

"Whom the gods seek to ruin, they first drive mad." While the war in Spain was raging, Napoleon's plans for the domination of all Europe had grown more and more fantastic, and in his efforts to enforce the "Continental System" he cast all common prudence to the winds. It would be idle to deny that Napoleon was a statesman. He found leisure amid the stress and turmoil of his wars to remodel the institutions of his country, and to lay the foundations so truly and so deep that they have stood the long test of time. The main part of the French educational system is of his workmanship. His legislative reforms—the Code Napoléon—are still the very basis of French law. All threads of government and administration were knit up into his hands, and, with that passion for unity and centralised authority which marked the old Roman Cæsars, he strove to make, not merely France alone, but the whole of Europe, pivot upon himself. Yet the strange thing is that this great architect of Empire, with his portentous grasp of detail, his matchless powers of rapid organisation, his clear conception of the fundamental principles of government, lacked a real understanding of the minds of ordinary men. He made the fatal blunder, by no means rare in genius, of despising them. He trampled on their most cherished sentiments, flouted their national traditions, as though such things were of no consequence, and as though people had no past. And, having failed to gauge the depth of human prejudice and passion, he awoke too late to discover his mistake. Drunk with a power already swollen beyond measure, he reached out his hand continually for more, and nothing was so sacred or so

time-hallowed as to be inviolate. When in 1809 he seized possession of the Papal States in Italy, nothing much was said; but, when he proceeded further to punish the Pope's resistance by putting him in prison, Europe shuddered at the monstrous impiety. Yet there was another force more powerful and perhaps more permanent than even the Roman Catholic Church itself, which Napoleon in his folly insulted and ignored—men's natural love of freedom. In Spain we have already seen how this great force had upset his calculations; and in other countries it was to do the same. Austria and Prussia were in no true sense nations before Napoleon came, but, when he tampered with their independence, they learnt to value it as they had never valued it before; and, while these two peoples were planning to strike a blow for their deliverance, Napoleon made another blunder and a new discovery. He discovered that even in Russia peasants loved their home and that a Cossack's patriotism could, if challenged, be as staunch and tenacious as a Frenchman's.

Picture Napoleon then in 1809, still intent on starving England and, with this purpose still foremost in his mind, holding Europe down by an almost superhuman exertion of authority. In the spring of that year, soon after his failure to catch the British at Corunna, opposition begins first to raise a timid head. Austria gathers her armies and flings down the challenge. The blow falls swiftly, and, beaten once more at Wagram, Austria retires again into her shell to meditate revenge. Prussia meanwhile is stirring silently under the humiliating terms which Napoleon has imposed; her army is limited to forty thousand men; but Scharnhorst, her war minister, while obeying it in the letter, evades the spirit of the law, passing forty thousand young men at a time through a short-service course and so providing the country with an unlimited supply of trained reservists. Patriots and poets are meantime preaching a crusade for liberty. The material of revolt is ready, and Prussia bides her chance. Careless or ignorant of this growing spirit of unrest, Napoleon holds upon his course, resolute above all against any weakening in the blockade of England. Now,

of all the European countries which suffered from this interference in their trade, the most resentful—and rightly so—was Russia. Russia had everything to lose and nothing to gain by the defeat of England, and, though still bound to Napoleon by the Treaty of Tilsit, the Tsar from a lukewarm ally soon became a secret foe. Finally, in 1811, he put down his foot and refused to close his ports to neutral shipping at Napoleon's request; and with that Napoleon determined upon war. There is no more dramatic event in modern history than the campaign of Moscow; and the complete and sudden ruin which the invader suffered is enhanced tenfold by the tremendous character of his designs. He gathered an army 600,000 strong, drawing off the pick of his troops from other theatres. Nothing on the same scale had been previously attempted; and his preparations were so abnormally prolonged that it was not until the late June of 1812 that the Grande Armée, with Napoleon at its head, set foot on Russian soil. The Russians fell back before its advance, leaving the country desert as they went. Progress was slow, and Napoleon soon found himself battling not so much with men as with the mud. At last, at Borodino, nearly 500 miles from the frontier, the Russians turned to fight. They were beaten, as was natural, but the carnage was appalling, and Napoleon for his part lost forty thousand men; yet he pressed on to take Moscow, thinking its capture would terminate the war. Fatal illusion; for, when he reached the old capital, the fruit of his imagined victory turned to ashes in his hand. The place was empty. The Tsar, the garrison, even the inhabitants had disappeared. Next evening unseen hands set fire to various buildings. Moscow burned for five whole days, and was left a gutted shell, hardly a fit place even to quarter troops. It was now that Napoleon committed his most grievous blunder, for, fancying that the Russians might still be brought to terms, he lingered on. Little did he know the Russian character, still less the Russian climate. On the 7th of November came the first winter frost. On the 16th the thermometer sank to below zero, and the roads

became a sheet of slippery ice. Awaking to his peril, Napoleon now ordered the retreat and the tragedy began. Food was growing scarce, the horse transport was useless, and hordes of Cossacks hung perpetually upon the flank. At the river Beresina they broke down the bridge and prepared to dispute the passage. After a fierce fight, however, the French forced their way across, and the retreat continued through deep snow and blinding blizzards, covered the while by the heroic rear-guard under Marshal Ney. But it was now less an army than a rabble that retreated. Thousands were left dead in the snow-drifts. Stragglers never rejoined. Two-thirds, perhaps, of the whole number perished on the route, and, while the starving remnant was still battling through the snows, Napoleon fled and left them to their fate. Once back in Paris, he was still able to rally the despondent people by the magic of his presence. There was fight left in old France yet; but the "Grande Armée," the very flower of her manhood, had ceased to exist.

Napoleon had sowed the wind, and he was now to reap the whirlwind. Outraged Europe turned bodily against him; enemies appeared on every hand; and in countries which but recently had seemed his peaceful allies armies sprang, as though by magic, from the soil. Prussia was up at once and joined with Russia; soon after Austria, Sweden, and other lesser powers united with these and England in a final coalition, pledging themselves to make no separate peace till France had been overcome. Napoleon's doom seemed sealed. After waging continuous war for over twenty years, after raising army upon army, first for the defence of the Revolution, and then to provide material for the Emperor's own campaigns, France was utterly exhausted. Her funds were drained, and she had no more men. Yet, spurring his countrymen to a last frantic effort, Napoleon raised an army of mere boys, and with these new troops behind him he re-crossed the Rhine. The battle which was to decide the fate of Europe took place at Leipsic in western Saxony. In this, the "Battle of the Nations," Napoleon was outnumbered by nearly two to

one ; yet he held out even against such odds for the best part of three days. The issue, however, left him on further hope. Falling back into France, he fought even now a campaign which was a masterpiece of defensive strategy ; attempted, it is said, to take his life by poison ; and on 6th April, as we have seen already, was compelled to surrender his crown. His place was to be filled by a member of the old Bourbon dynasty, the brother of Louis XVI ; and he himself was banished into honourable exile in the little Mediterranean island of Elba. So all was over. "Farewell, my children !" he said, at parting, to the men of his "Old Guard". "Comrades, farewell ! Forget me not !" Ten months later, almost to a day, the time came for them to prove that they remembered.

CHAPTER XVII

THE HUNDRED DAYS

I

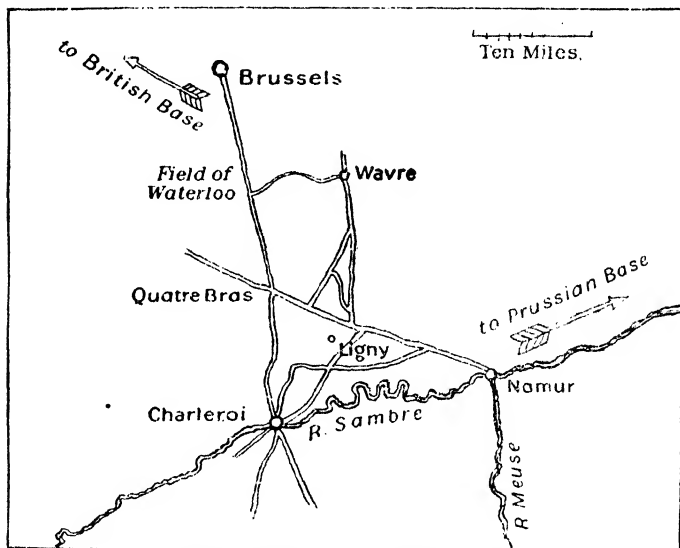
AT the great Allied Congress gathered in Vienna, where their time was pretty evenly divided between revising the map of Europe to the detriment of France and quarrelling (as allies will) with one another, the representatives of the victorious Powers were rudely shocked in the spring of 1815 by an unpleasant piece of news. Napoleon, whom they fondly imagined to be safely stowed in Elba, had landed—so report had it—on the coast of southern France, and was even then marching upon Paris. And the worst of it was that the news was true. Napoleon was indeed at large again. On the first day of March he had disembarked at Fréjus with a bodyguard about a thousand strong all told. It had been touch and go at first whether the men of his old armies would hail him as their captain or arrest him as a traitor to the new Bourbon King. A battalion of these troops was ordered out to bar his passage in the south. Napoleon had advanced up to their bayonet points. "Soldiers," he said, "do you not know your general? If there is one among you who desires to kill his Emperor, let him do it now." The words snapped the spell of authority which bound them; and the next moment the men were giving the Emperor a resounding cheer. A fortnight later Napoleon had entered Paris unopposed. The Bourbon King had fled; and the Corsican adventurer was once more lord of France. By June he had between two and

three hundred thousand soldiers at his call, of whom 120,000 were ready for action on the Belgian front. Meantime the Vienna Congress had acted with decision. They hurried their armies to the Netherlands with all the speed they might. Wellington with 100,000 of mixed British, Belgian, and Hanoverian troops concentrated at Brussels. Blücher with 150,000 Prussians moved from the Lower Rhine to join him. Even alone these two contingents seemed more than enough to cope with Napoleon's levy. But they were little more, it must be remembered, than a vanguard or first instalment of the Allies' strength. The campaign now about to be waged was, therefore, in no real sense a final or decisive test. Had Napoleon won it, there remained immense reserves of men in Europe which would still have been available to take the field against him; and, even though the day at Waterloo should have gone wholly in his favour, Napoleon could scarcely have recovered his old ascendancy. Somewhere, sooner or later, he was bound to meet his match.

II

Whether or no Napoleon would have been well-advised to wait and allow the allied armies to attack him is not a matter of much consequence. His command over France was still far too precarious to admit of such a course. Rapid victory was essential to success; and for political no less than for military reasons he took the offensive as soon as ever he was ready to march north. Yet he had good ground for hope. Fortune seemed at the moment to smile on him once more. Though their discipline was not what it had been, his men were for the most part seasoned veterans. His opponents, and more especially the British, were largely dependent upon raw recruits. Then again, though his forces were numerically inferior, he possessed the great strategical advantage of interior lines. Owing to the necessity of covering the frontier into Belgium, the allied troops were strung out over a long line. Wellington

and Blücher were, moreover, forced to operate from widely distant and divergent bases, the one from Brussels and the north-west Belgian ports, the other from Namur and the east. Napoleon's hope lay, therefore, in attacking and crushing each of them in turn, and, when he succeeded on 15th June in effecting his passage of the river Sambre at Charleroi, all seemed to favour this bold plan. With his usual faculty for quick decision—and for rapid execution



THE CAMPAIGN OF WATERLOO.

even more—he proposed to deal a right hand blow at Blücher on his east; and, this done, to turn and settle accounts with Wellington at leisure. Of such a plan the allied generals had no inkling. On the very night when Napoleon had crossed the Sambre not thirty miles away, Wellington attended at a ball in Brussels, so utterly unconscious was he of his peril. Yet the peril was obvious, the plan incontestably correct. It lagged but a trifle in the execution, or a very different issue would have followed.

But that trifle was enough to mar it all. In dealing his blow at Blücher, Napoleon failed to effect complete annihilation; and Blücher's army, retiring to the north, survived to fight another day—on the field of Waterloo.

On the morning, then, of Friday, the 16th of June, we must picture the disposition of the three actors in the drama much as follows: In and around Brussels is Wellington's scattered army of a hundred thousand men. South-west of Wellington are Blücher's forces about half as large again, of which some eighty thousand are rapidly concentrating upon Ligny village. At Charleroi, not ten miles to the south-west of Ligny, lies Napoleon's army, 120,000 strong—larger, that is, than Wellington's, but less than Blücher's. That day Napoleon strikes. He sends Ney forward up the great highway towards Brussels to seize the Quatre Bras cross-roads, and there to hold in play any British regiments arriving by this route—the only route by which they could reach Ligny. Himself he turns on Blücher's Prussians awaiting him at Ligny, and hurls against them the better part of his remaining strength. Blücher's position was ill-chosen; and, as Wellington predicted when he saw it on the morning of the fight, the Prussians were "damnably mauled" by the French artillery. Blücher's men, none the less, stuck manfully to their defence. Charge and countercharge ran fiercely through the long afternoon. Villages were taken and retaken; and four o'clock found Napoleon still hammering at Ligny and still held. Yet he was within a touch of victory. A few more troops to throw into the balance, and it seemed a moral certainty that the Prussian line must break. Napoleon, therefore, had dispatched one message and he now dispatched a second, urging Ney to send across reinforcements from Quatre Bras. This, however, was more easily said than done. There, too, there had been fighting, though of a less desperate sort. The Quatre Bras cross-roads had been originally but lightly held by Wellington's advance guard; and, acting with decent speed, Ney might well have carried them without much opposition. But Ney's

movements had been unaccountably delayed. His marching orders were not given him till half-way through the morning, and it was well past noon before he was able to deliver his attack. By then it was too late. For, almost as soon as Ney entered upon action, Wellington's advance guard received succour from the rear. British regiments were beginning to filter down along the road from Brussels; and, as Ney warmed to his work, he found the numbers opposed to him slowly but steadily increasing. By four o'clock, therefore, he too had made but little real impression; and he too was looking for reinforcements at his need. Now, among the French troops assigned to Ney's command was a corps twenty thousand strong, and led by d'Erlon. Thanks to the late start which had been made that morning this corps had lagged behind, and was still, in mid-afternoon, some distance from Quatre Bras. With growing impatience Ney looked for its arrival. He sent out peremptory orders to accelerate its pace; but still it did not come. The fact was that, while on the march, d'Erlon had fallen in with Napoleon's message calling for help at Ligny. Interpreting the message which was meant for Ney as a summons to himself, d'Erlon had suspended his advance towards Quatre Bras and had struck out east across country to Napoleon's aid. When news of this reached Ney, he broke into a fury and sent a fresh and still more vigorous message to recall the wanderer. Ney was, after all, d'Erlon's immediate chief; the order left no loophole for evasion; so on receipt of it d'Erlon turned once more upon his tracks and resumed his tardy progress towards Quatre Bras. But the twofold muddle was now past remedy. The harm was done. Having spent the afternoon in wandering to and fro between the armies, d'Erlon's corps ended by benefiting neither. Disappointed of its aid, Ney not only failed to carry the cross-roads, but towards evening was actually falling back towards the rear. Napoleon, for his part, did indeed achieve one half of his intention. By a prodigious effort he threw Blücher out of Ligny and rolled up the Prussian line in utter rout. But

night was closing in. Dark thunder-clouds obscured the failing light. It was impossible at such an hour to press the victory home; thus, though heavily defeated, Blücher's army was not by any means destroyed, and, if Napoleon imagined that his main purpose was accomplished, he was grievously in error. Forty-eight hours later, on the Sunday afternoon, he was to learn to his bitter cost that the Prussians could still fight.

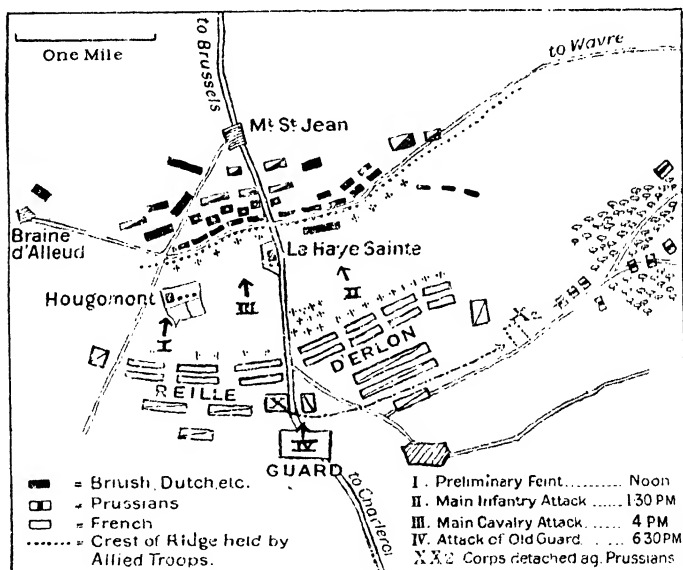
Already there has appeared in the conduct of Napoleon's strategy—in the delay about giving Ney his marching orders, in the grievous bungle over d'Erlon's corps—enough to give the impression of an uncertainty and error altogether unfamiliar to it in the past. Something was clearly wrong; but what this was it is not so easy to determine. Some critics would have it that the staff-work was at fault, and that in the rapid organisation for this last campaign there had not been time to select efficient officers, or to restore to the army's leadership its old-time temper and cohesion. Others would make out that Napoleon himself was principally to blame, and that the self-confident habit of his later years caused him to concentrate the direction of affairs too much in his own hands. Others again would set all down to physical debility, maintaining that the alert and vigorous brain which planned Austerlitz and Jena was already dulled by the advance of years, and that his growing corpulence had predisposed him to a certain laxity of grip and loss of accurate judgment. However this may be, it is certain that during these days Napoleon blundered, as he had seldom done before; and now on the morrow of Ligny he fell into a very grave miscalculation. Alive to the necessity of following up the Prussians who had escaped him overnight, he sent off his Marshal Grouchy in pursuit. Most unwisely, however, he jumped to the conclusion that the Prussian retreat was directed on Namur; and it was towards Namur accordingly that Grouchy sought them. Now, upon the morning of the battle Wellington had ridden over to Ligny to confer with Blücher. What precisely passed between them it is difficult to ascertain; but on one point they pretty clearly reached a

mutual understanding, and it was this, that, if either were defeated, he should make it his object at all hazards to keep in touch with the other. Then came the battle in which Blücher had been beaten; but, though beaten, he had retained his full liberty of movement; and instead of retiring east towards their base (as Napoleon had imagined) the Prussians had marched almost due north. All Saturday they were in movement on the road to Wavre, and by nightfall they were safely collected round about that town—not eight miles distant, as the crow flies, from Waterloo. Meanwhile, in accordance with instructions, Grouchy was away on his wild-goose chase towards Namur. The capture of some stragglers on the road confirmed him in his erroneous calculation. It was not in fact till late on Saturday night that he realised the truth; and thus, while he was ponderously reconsidering his plans and demanding further instructions from Napoleon, the elusive Prussian army had recovered touch with Wellington and was marching to turn the scales of victory at Waterloo.

III

Waterloo was already marked out as the scene of the coming combat between the British and French forces. Throughout the Saturday, while Blücher was retreating upon Wavre, there had been much movement up the Charleroi-Brussels road. Early in the morning Wellington had discovered (what he had not known the previous night) that the Prussian army was retiring after a severe defeat. His advanced troops at Quatre Bras were thus placed in dangerous isolation, and he determined to withdraw them further north. Half-way to Brussels he halted them upon a long low swell of ground, known after a neighbouring hamlet as the ridge of Mont St. Jean. This ridge Wellington's trained eye had long before selected as an ideal position for a defensive fight. It overlooked—not steeply, indeed, but down a smooth slope of dropping ground—the shallow valley or depression across which the French troops advancing upon Brussels must inevitably pass. To its front

there lay two farmsteads, La Haye Saint and Hougomont, which, if held, would serve as breakwaters or outposts against the enemy's assault. Behind it the ground dropped slightly once again, thus affording valuable shelter, where the reserves might marshal or manœuvre out of sight. Such then was the position—incomparable for the purposes of the Duke's strategy—in which under drenching rain his forces made their bivouac on the Saturday night.



THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

Hougomont was occupied and strengthened by the Guards. La Haye Sainte, unluckily assigned to the young Prince of Orange, was less well fortified. Behind the farms Wellington's main force, some seventy thousand strong, was disposed along the ridge, British and foreign regiments much intermixed, but the British reserved upon the whole for last emergencies, and the foreign troops thrust forward along the convenient line of a sunk lane. Seeing how crucial was the defence of the right wing, behind which lay our communi-

cations with the sea, a Netherlander force was thrown out westwards at some considerable distance from the field. Thus posted, Wellington awaited the attack; and he had to wait some time. Napoleon was in no hurry. The ground was soaking wet; and, counting to win the battle in the afternoon, he gave it time to dry. That miscalculation was to cost him dear.

It was about mid-day when he delivered his first blow—a smart thrust at Hougomont upon the left. There was a fierce tussle at short range around the farmyard gates; but the assault was beaten back, and its purpose—to draw away reinforcements from the centre of our line—was definitely foiled. At one o'clock, a massed battery of eighty guns began a bombardment of our main positions; and half-an-hour later the corps of d'Erlon, unused in the fighting of two days before, was sent up the slope to the right of La Haye Sainte. Though the garrison of the farm withstood the shock, French troops swept up past it and drove in the Belgian troops of the first line. The position was critical; but a British brigade behind them filled the gap; and, as the enemy recoiled, some squadrons of our cavalry, the Life Guards and Dragoons, were let loose from behind the ridge. Caught up in their onrush, a Highland regiment raced with them side by side, the men clinging as best they could to stirrup-straps. Together they swept back the French infantry in tumult, brushed aside a counter-charge of horse, and, reaching even as far as the great battery, sabred many of its gunners where they stood. Then there came a lull in the fighting. It was well past three o'clock. The first grand assault had definitely failed; and already Napoleon had news that enemy troops were moving far away upon his eastern flank. It was Blücher and his Prussians. There was little time to lose.

About four began the second phase of the great fight—a renewal of the attempt to break the centre of our line. La Haye Sainte farm was again assaulted, and in vain. Again the guns spoke out, doing terrible havoc on the ridge. But the principal effort of this second phase was the charge

of the French horse. Ney, somehow deluded into the idea that we were weakening, ordered out the cavalry *en masse*. It was a reckless stroke; and, as he saw the five thousand mounted men moving in close ranks up the opposing ridge, Napoleon realised that once again his marshal's impetuosity had played him false.¹ For our troops, however much they had suffered from the guns, were very far from weakening; and, when they saw the cavalry approach, they both knew their cue and took it. The infantry formed quickly into hollow squares, dotted chequer-wise along the ridge. The gunners fired their last charge at point-blank range, then left their guns and retreated to the shelter of the squares; and, as the French cuirassiers, chasseurs, and lancers came plunging heavily along, volley after volley from the British muskets thinned and confused their ranks. Bayonets were ready when the musket fire gave out; and, though the French horsemen rode round the squares and past the squares, they could find no means to break them. The cavalry of the Guard was sent up to join the rest. Backward and forward the charges flowed and ebbed like "sea water among rocks"; yet, like rocks, though sorely battered, the British squares stood firm. By six o'clock the second effort, too, had ended in failure, as the first had done; and already the Prussians were beginning to close in.

But now to the French there came a momentary success—slight in itself, yet sufficient to tempt Napoleon to a last desperate throw. About six o'clock the farm of La Haye Sainte was carried, its garrison was overpowered, the place itself was in flames, and, with this obstacle removed, our front was doubly open to the French attack. Napoleon, snatching at a straw, called out his last reserve—the Imperial Guard, which had hitherto lain inactive during the whole day. The new thrust was to be delivered between La Haye Sainte and Hougomont; and there was still some

¹ On the other hand, it is by no means certain that Ney gave the order, or indeed whether it was given at all. The whole affair may have arisen from some misunderstanding of the cavalry commanders. In any case, if Napoleon disapproved of it, it was not beyond his power to stop the movement at the outset.

chance, though not a great one, that it might even now succeed. The sun was low towards setting as the Old Guard took the hill. Veterans to a man; they never flinched as they went up under the shower of grape; and, as column after column broke savagely against our line, the affair looked critical. Foreseeing the shock, Wellington had brought forward the last of his reserves from behind the shelter of the ridge. He even recalled the Belgian contingent which he had sent out to guard his flank. For all that, there came a moment when all might have been lost; and it was then that an English officer named Colborne, acting on his own initiative, performed a daring feat, which, had it failed, might have meant the breaking of the line, but which in the event proved brilliantly decisive. What Colborne did was this: he swung out his regiment at right angles to the front, a manœuvre which left a perilous gap in our own line, but which enabled him to sweep the flank of the French column with a murderous cross-fire. It was the work of a moment. The French took no advantage of the yawning gap; but, caught under the volleys from this unexpected quarter, they staggered and recoiled. Wellington caught the tide of victory at its full flood. As the broken ranks of the French Guard went down the hill, he gave a general order for advance; and all along the line our troops pressed after them in hot pursuit. Almost at the same moment, the Prussian army burst in upon the battle from the east. Late though he was, Blücher had kept his tryst. His troops had been upon the march since morning; but the muddy lanes had made progress slow and painful. One of his corps had come from many miles the farther side of Wavre; and, though Wellington was expecting him by two o'clock, the wonder is that they arrived as early as they did. By four o'clock the first of them were actually debouching from the forests upon Napoleon's east. The containing force, sent out to keep them back, was for a while successful. But in the last hour before sunset, when the Old Guard took the hill, their pressure grew with the increasing weight of numbers, and

could not any longer be denied. Even as the Old Guard was falling back before the forward sweep of the whole English line, the Prussian columns crashed into their flank. The sun went down and the moon rose over a scene of indescribable confusion. The French were racing for safety to the crossings of the Sambre; and down the long road through Quatre Bras and on to Charleroi the allied cavalry hunted them through the night. No rally was possible; and only a remnant of some thirty thousand men ever reached the river-side.

IV

So all was over. The brief flutter of the Hundred Days ended with the occupation of Paris by the allied armies, a second restoration of the Bourbon King, and the confinement of Bonaparte himself on the rock of St. Helena, where he spent his six remaining years of life in compiling his memoirs and querulously explaining the causes of his *débâcle*. The Congress of Allied States took up again its interrupted labours and its task of rearranging the European map. France, shorn of her conquests, was cut down to the frontier of pre-Revolution days. Holland and Belgium were knit together into one. Napoleon's confederation of the German States was converted into a perpetual league. Venice and Lombardy went back to Austria. Russia took a generous share of Poland, Prussia of Saxony, while we ourselves got Malta and (what proved more valuable) the Cape. Yet such trifling readjustments are no index of the true meaning of the Allies' victory. It meant, first of all, that the century-long duel between ourselves and France had been settled finally for good and all. Henceforth London, and not Paris, was to lead the world, and the fruits of colonial empire in far-off continents were definitely secured to us upon the field of Waterloo. Yet France's downfall meant much more than this. It meant the defeat—temporary perhaps, but none the less conclusive—of a new ideal. In the Revolution had been born a spirit which

defied the accepted canons of old-world politics, a spirit which had claimed for a long-suffering people the right to manage their country for themselves, and to have done with the hollow privilege of aristocracies and kings. At the voice of the Revolution the world's governors had trembled, doubting their own security of power, and in the defeat of France they recognised the instrument of their salvation, fancying that the new spirit of democracy could now easily be crushed. So the triumph which rescued Europe from Napoleon's tyranny served also to smother among many peoples the new-born hope of a freer, happier world. The true child of the Vienna Congress was not liberty and progress, but a compact binding the monarchs of the victorious powers to uphold the established order of the past and suppress all dangerous tendency towards democratic change. The "Holy Alliance," as the authors of the compact christened it, was designed, not merely to undo what France had done, but to make mankind forget, if possible, that it had been done at all.

CHAPTER XVIII

ENGLAND DURING THE WAR

DURING the period of great wars civilian history must take inevitably a second place. Doings at the battle-front monopolize the focus of our vision, and while we admire the tragic heroisms of Waterloo or Talavera or Trafalgar, it is often difficult to remember that the men who fought there were but a tiny fraction of the whole community. Nevertheless the strain of a long campaign is not borne exclusively by soldiers, and its ultimate effects are felt perhaps most strongly by the folk who stay at home. In this the Napoleonic war was no exception. Not merely was it a time of great anxiety and stress for England, it was also a period of great change. The whole condition of the people went, as it were, into the melting-pot, and the England that emerged when Waterloo was over was a very different place from the England of 1789.

One strange result of the war was an enormous and unprecedented increase in the volume of our trade—yet not so strange, perhaps, when we consider closely. During these years our sea supremacy had grown complete, and our continental rivals, already weakened or exhausted by the drain on purse and man-power, were shut out from foreign traffic by a rigorous maritime blockade. Thus raw materials which might have gone to their ports came to ours, and markets which had previously absorbed their manufactures looked now to us instead. It was a lucky accident, to say the least of it, that, at the very moment when this new demand for manufactured goods arose, fate had equipped us with the means to meet it. The crop of mechanical devices,

invented at the outset of King George's reign, was now coming to fruition. Mines were being properly exploited. Power-looms were working busily. The potteries were discovering a novel scope. In northern England the whole character of life and landscape was being rapidly transformed. Factory towns sprang up like mushrooms on the waste sides of Yorkshire moors, and "the hum of the workshops was heard in places which had previously been disturbed only by the whirr of the grouse". Trade boomed. Production was doubled, doubled again, and then redoubled. The iron-ore output, which in 1740 had reached the modest total of but 17,000 tons, was multiplied as much as twelve times over before the century's close. Even more remarkable was the development in cotton, which, not so long before, had been well-nigh suppressed in the wool interest. Now the raw stuff poured in by ship-loads; the mills were set working at high pressure; in the fifteen years preceding Waterloo the number of hands employed was actually doubled, and the value of cotton goods sent out to foreign countries reached the then amazing total of seventeen million pounds. England, in short, had become the "workshop of the world," and not distant continents alone, but an exhausted Europe looked to her industries for their support. We owned the goods; we owned the ships to carry them; and the war's plain result was to make our merchants rich beyond their dreams. For every pound's worth they exported when the war began they were exporting four when it was over. Nor, while the British manufacturers and merchants were piling up their gains, did the British farmer prove a loser by the war. Napoleon's boycott did not succeed, as he intended, in starving England out, but it made her go uncomfortably short. The result was that every bushel of corn which could be grown was needed; land which had never previously been tilled was broken up for sowing, and even Dartmoor hill-sides were brought under the plough. The farmers' efforts were abundantly repaid, for the price of grain soared up to heights unknown before. In the seventies and eighties a quarter of wheat had fetched roughly forty shillings. At

the time of Trafalgar it was worth just twice as much, and at one point a little later it reached as high as 120 shillings. No wonder the farmer thrived, or that the landlord, with a quick eye to his advantage, raised the rents. The "upper class" had nothing to complain of in the results of the Great War.

But there is another side to the picture. When wheat is selling at 120 shillings a quarter, it is a welcome windfall to the lucky man who grows it; but it means something like starvation to the poor man who lives on bread. Wages had not risen to meet the cost of food; and the working class soon felt the pinch of want to an almost intolerable degree. It had once been England's boast that her village labourers were the best fed of any nation; but, under the pressure of these years, the standard of living sank to the lowest limits of a bare subsistence. Meat seldom entered the houses of the poor. Cheese was a luxury but rarely tasted; and one old man living about this time declared (so the tale goes) that a cold rice pudding, the gift of a rich neighbour, was the greatest treat that he could recollect. To many, in short, starvation was an ever-present terror; and, when the average labourer's wage was but ten to fourteen shillings, the father of a family was often scarcely able to make both ends meet. Prices, already driven high enough by natural causes, were further increased by heavy war taxation; for the working-man, though exempt from tax on income, contributed largely through the excise and customs duties levied upon the things he had to buy. Thus, if he drank beer, the malt in it was taxed. If he drank tea or coffee, these imports were taxed too. He paid taxes equally if he bought soap, or salt, or sugar; and in one way or another nearly half his paltry earnings went to defray the national expenditure on war. It is not strange that at times the working class grew restive, or that disturbances took place. At one moment even the women broke out into revolt; and we read of stalwarts in petticoats raiding the local flour-mill, boarding corn ships as they lay in harbour, and even forming associations to keep the price of butter

down. In some districts there were more serious outbursts of male violence; and yeomanry were employed to suppress rioters and carry off the ring-leaders to prison. Such measures of repression were effectual, but they left a sore behind them; and it is only natural that the English masses began to ponder more seriously than ever the doings of revolutionary France. Here in "free" England, which was fighting, they were told, to save the world from Napoléon's tyranny, the condition of the populace was hardly a good advertisement for the benefits of "freedom". While the rich were growing richer and were adding every year to the comfort of their homes, the plight of the vast majority was growing steadily worse. The squires and gentry did little to relieve, nothing to cure, the prevalent distresses; nor were they even interested to see common justice done. On the contrary, so far as active measures were concerned, the "governing class" showed itself to be the worst enemy to freedom. No doubt they could justify their policies by pleading the necessities of war; and, when all is said, it was their obstinacy and resolution which brought the war through to its end. Nevertheless, the victory was bought at a great price. For in the process they found it necessary to trample down the liberties of their own people; and, in a very different sense from that which we have mentioned, England was a changed country when the war was done.

The fact is that now, as so frequently in history, we find war affording a handle to the powers that be to draw the reins of their authority more tightly. The opportunity was exercised in two remarkable and separate ways, one bearing chiefly on the artisans of the industrial districts, the other affecting the agricultural population of the country-side, and we will discuss the former first. In the last quarter of the century the introduction of machinery had, as we have seen, produced a new type of worker. The old-fashioned handicraftsman was soon beaten in the race by his new competitor, the engine, which could turn out twenty or a hundred times his output at infinitely less cost. The handicraftsman did not yield, indeed, without a fight; he

struggled on against the unequal odds; at times he even took to open violence, and broke up the machines which were filching away the trade out of his hands. Nevertheless, it was a losing battle he was fighting; and, though he continued, in fact, to ply his trade for many years to come, the handicraftsman was obviously destined to die out. Far more important, more numerous, and, in the eyes of the authorities, more dangerous were the growing mass of factory-workers who supplanted him. True, a large proportion of their number were women and young children who were ready to perform the unskilled duties of the factory at a lower wage than men. This gave the masters and mill-owners an obvious advantage; nor were they slow to take it. The greater part of them were self-made upstarts, who, having won their position by the sweat of their own brow, felt no qualms about exacting the same industry from others. They showed neither mercy nor consideration to their numerous employees. The workshops were foul, damp, and insanitary. The working-hours were intolerably long—fourteen, eighteen, and in some cases twenty hours a day. The pay, even for men, was miserably low, varying from ten to five-and-twenty shillings weekly; and fines were inflicted for the most trifling breach of workshop regulations—"for whistling, 1/-, for being found dirty, 1/-, for being sick and failing to find a substitute, 6/-," and so forth. It is impossible to exaggerate the sufferings of these folk. Their day was given over to a dull monotony of hopeless and unedifying toil; yet the short hours spent at home were scarcely less wretched. The cottages were overcrowded, bare, and comfortless. The family life was ruined by the grim necessity of sending out the children to earn wages almost as soon as ever they could walk. The only pastimes were of a brutalising sort, cock-fights, boxing contests, and the like. Education there was none; and, in short, the conditions of life in these hideous factory-towns of northern and central England were a scandal which cried shame upon the richest and most prosperous country in the world. Murmurs of discontent, of course, there were; and

in the last years of the century these murmurs grew. Now, the only effective weapon which these wretched folk could wield was combination. They could combine, form societies, or (as we should say) Trade Unions, and enforce their demands for better wages or conditions by the threat or act of strike. Such combinations did in point of fact take place, and workmen approached their masters with not unreasonable demands. But such a course was in those days accounted as a crime against society. If wages were to be regulated at all, their regulation had been held for centuries past to be the business of the State alone. Any interference on the part of workmen would only act, it was thought, to the detriment of the nation's precious trade; and such an interference could not for a moment be allowed. Parliament was approached. The country, let us remember, was at the crisis of its war, and at such times the government is often in a nervous state. Disturbed by the news of what was going on, and scared by the revolutionary spirit that was spreading across from France, the nation's representatives determined on stern suppression of all "combination in restraint of trade". By the so-called "Combination Law" of 1799 they enacted that all conference between workmen was a crime, punishable by imprisonment or hard-labour for two months. In vain did the artisans protest against this tyrannical procedure. It is true that the masters themselves were also forbidden to combine; but there was little chance that they would be detected, still less that they would be punished. The sole effect of the law was to give them unlimited advantage to grind down the men and women under their control. Thus a bootmaker in London halved his employees' pay, and, when some of them protested, he haled them up before the court of the Lord Mayor and had them committed for hard labour. A group of cotton-weavers at Stockport refused to continue work on account of a deduction made from their miserable pittance (eight shillings weekly for a day of fourteen hours). They too were given a choice between immediate resumption or the

jail. If such cases were exceptional, it serves merely as a proof how utterly the rest were terrorised and cowed. The industrial labourer was in short reduced to the rank of a slave or a helot. Work he must for whatever hours his masters might demand and for whatever wage they offered. Yet, as some of the men complained, it was literally unsafe to mention the forbidden topic of working hours or wages even within the shelter of their own cottage walls.

The lot of the agricultural labourer meanwhile was not dissimilar; but his particular misfortunes sprang from a separate cause, and, to understand this properly, we must first cast back our minds some way into the past. Twice during the history of the country, once in the fourteenth century and once in Tudor times, our attention has been drawn to the process of "Enclosure," whereby the open fields of "common land" had been fenced in by pushful landlords. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that this process, though more or less continuous throughout the centuries, was by any means complete, or that the whole of England was now parcelled out in separate hedge-lined fields. Indeed, at the beginning of the eighteenth century as much as half the country still remained unenclosed. Thus in most villages there were still large areas of this so-called "common," part of it plough-land, cut up in long narrow strips and divided in varying proportions among the villagers, part of it open pasturage or "waste," where nearly every villager would have his "rights," and on which he could graze a cow, feed geese, pick faggots, or cut turf. Such a system, however, did not suit the progressive theories of the more powerful landowners. Great loss of time and trouble were involved in the cultivation of the scattered "strips," and a compact farm of large-sized fields was far more efficient, more productive, and more economical. Throughout the eighteenth century, therefore, every effort had been made to do away with the old system and to "enclose" the land wherever it was possible to do so. Towards the end of the century the process became more rapid, but its climax was only reached during the period of the war itself. The threatened short-

age in the supply of corn, and the magnificent inducements then held out to any who should grow it, provided a stimulus to which the landowners were only too anxious to respond. It had been proved already that "enclosure" paid; it was equally certain now that in these years of dearth "enclosure" would pay doubly; so millions and millions of fresh acres were enclosed. The procedure was quite simple. The local squire made application before Parliament. A Bill was drafted for the grant of enclosure of the district. The members, most of whom were landowners or the partisans of such, gave ready assent to its provisions, and a party of commissioners was then sent down to the village to divide up the "common lands". The big landowner himself received a goodly share, both of pasture-land and of tillage. He fenced it round, and, working it in conjunction with his existing fields, he was soon able to render it more fruitful and productive. The same held true of the more prosperous farmers. But the effects of the new enclosures did not end there. The other smaller holders of the old common lands received from the commissioners—in due proportion—a compact plot which it was their duty to fence in. But here lay the rub. The poor man could often not afford to fence his plot, and, if he failed, the plot was thereby forfeit. Nor, if he succeeded, were his troubles over. In the old days he had just been able to make two ends meet, because, besides the produce which he grew on his small strips, he possessed various rights, as we have seen, over the common "waste" or pasture. But by the scheme of the redistribution the "common" was no more: there was nowhere now where he could graze his cow; nowhere to drive his geese; nowhere to gather faggots or cut peat for his cottage fire. The small holder was deprived, in short, of half his livelihood, and there is little wonder that the landlords' policy was the cause of bitter and widespread resentment. Notices of the application for "enclosure" were torn down from the church door. The obnoxious rails and fences set up on the new boundaries were uprooted in the night. The magistrates punished the offenders ruthlessly whenever

they could catch them. Riots broke out and were suppressed, and still the process of redistribution pursued its fatal course. The agriculture of the country was no doubt thereby improved; but thousands upon thousands of sturdy English yeomen were ruined out of hand. The small plots they were allowed passed away from them to others. Some migrated to the towns or to the colonies. Some became hired labourers on the larger farms. But, though the farmers thrived, the wages they paid were so inadequate that the men who sowed and harvested the corn were literally unable to keep their stomachs fed. The situation went rapidly from bad to worse, and, warned by the example lately set by the French peasants, the authorities took fright. Their remedy, however, was almost worse than the disease. It had been the custom since Elizabethan times to allow the poor and sick a certain measure of relief, paid by the sanction of a magistrate out of the local "rates". This dole was, naturally, not intended for able-bodied workers, but, rather than see the standard of men's wages raised, the authorities determined to apply it to that purpose. A certain fixed rate of poor relief was granted to each family, more when the price of corn increased, and less when it diminished. The plan was costly, and as much as seven million pounds was doled out annually to keep the folk alive. Yet, although the "rates" came out of the landowner's pocket, the system paid him well. Rents were high, but, so long as wages were kept low, the tenant farmers could afford them. And wages did keep low, for, seeing that the labourer was assisted from the rates, it proved unnecessary to pay him more. Indeed, the very fact that he was in receipt of such assistance was often used as an excuse to pay him less. Thus the authorities' object was achieved; but at what a lamentable cost! The agricultural labourer was now worse than his master's slave. He was a pauper, dependent for his livelihood on the doles paid by the rich and thereby doubly pledged to good behaviour. Starvation itself was almost a lesser evil than the monstrous scandal of this universal degradation. But the peace was at least outwardly preserved.

Such then was the fruit—the bitter fruit—of a century of constitutional government. It was now one hundred and five-and-twenty years since the pretensions of an ambitious monarchy had been overthrown and a new era ushered in with golden prospects of freedom and reform. But the English people had been cheated of its destiny. The very men who had broken the Crown's power, had established themselves securely in its room, and their little finger had, in fact, proved thicker than the strongest Stuart king's loins. All the fine phrases these men had once employed about liberty and justice had turned out a hollow sham. "Self-government" had been interpreted as meaning government by themselves. "Freedom" had signified nothing but the strong man's freedom to lord it over the weak, and "Parliamentary privilege" had become the strongest weapon of misrule in the hands of this selfish aristocracy. Their power was limitless. The House of Lords was drawn wholly from their ranks; the House of Commons was "representative" of them alone. The laws which they made in Parliament they further administered as magistrates, and the artisan or labourer who fell foul of his employer soon found himself put into the dock *with the employer as his judge*. Thus the old talk of English liberty and English justice, which had figured so large in the preceding era, was conveniently forgotten, and no sooner were the aristocracy established as the "governing class" than they began to think of governing to the exclusion of all else. Let us, however, be fair to these men and try at least to understand them. They believed with a conviction—blind perhaps, but still indubitably honest—that the whole country's welfare depended on themselves; they were the sheet-anchor of the State. The ignorant, unlettered masses they regarded as animals or children who stood in need at all times of external guidance, required upon occasions fatherly correction, must not be humoured or pampered or indulged, and must not, come what might, be allowed to do any thinking or acting for themselves. Even the more conscientious members of "upper-class"

society—the theorists, the philanthropists, the parsons—held much the same opinion of the “lower classes”. It was the fashion to be shocked at their “levity,” horrified at their “extravagance”. God had made some men poor for His own sufficient reasons, and their duty it was to accept contentedly the station in life to which they were assigned; to quarrel with their lot, or to attempt to alter it, was a sin. Then came the French upheaval. These comfortable philosophers saw the whole social fabric of a neighbour nation totter to its fall; and feeling that, should England follow that pestilent example, all would soon be lost, the governing class set themselves down to “govern” with the conscientious rigour for which the crisis called. Fresh laws were made for the punishment of crime, and old laws were administered with a new severity. Barracks were built in the more unruly towns, and militiamen were instructed in the art of quelling mobs. Thank God, the “governing class” had at least done its duty, and His Majesty’s Government, as the Iron Duke would have said, had been carried courageously and firmly on.

Yet here and there scattered throughout England were those whose consciences rebelled against this theory of society, and who would by no means acquiesce in this brutal use of power. Towards the close of this gloomy era we begin to see the first gleams, as it were, of a new spirit which was one day, not far distant, to spread its light over the land. There were already liberal-minded zealots who openly preached the emancipation of the masses. There were “Radical” reformers who desired to see the whole condition of society “radically” changed—changed, that is, from the very root. There were even those among the well-to-do who, anxious to set an example of reform, undertook themselves to lead the “simple life,” tried to manage without servants, and excluded such luxuries as wine and pastry from their homes. Then, too, as always at such times, there were hot-headed young rebels, who were up in arms against the old rules of stiff convention, and who wished to remodel creation on a pattern of their own.

There was the poet Shelley, who first shocked society by his atheistical opinions, and then caused a tremendous stir by his strange views about divorce. There was Lord Byron, who also shocked society without much troubling about theories, and who yet was one day to sacrifice his life in the more noble cause of winning freedom for the Greeks. Even the solemn steady-going Wordsworth had passed, as we have seen, through a youthful phase of republican enthusiasm. Nor is it mere accident that all these three were poets; for, though we can find evidence in many quarters that a new spirit was stirring in the heart of England, yet nowhere perhaps was it more clearly manifest than in the world of books. If these poets were potential rebels in their political opinions, they were actual rebels in their art. More than this, they won their fight; and it is an interesting comment on the character of Englishmen that the most successful revolution they accomplished was the literary revolution which we call the "Romantic Movement".

The time was ripe for such a movement. A change was overdue. Throughout the eighteenth century poetry had been dying. The classical tradition, fostered by Pope and Johnson, had done all that could humanly be done to kill it.¹ Verse was turned out by rules, like a recipe in cookery. Plays were written and re-written upon the hackneyed themes of old Greek tragedy. Language had become so formal and so stilted that it lacked all living fire; and the literary hack, instead of following his own instincts or using his own observation, kept stiffly to the approved and classic models of the past. If he wrote a play, he did not try to depict men and women as they really were, but made his heroes rant and his heroines soliloquize in the so-called "Grand Style" of the classic drama. If he undertook to describe a sunrise, he did not get up betimes to seek inspiration on the spot, but worked out his effusion at a midnight sitting with appropriate tags from Ovid and Pope's

¹ We should not forget, however, the genius of Thomas Gray, whose "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," though somewhat formal in character, remains a poetic masterpiece.

Iliad. Originality, in short, was less considered than a show of what passed for learning. Nothing was fresh; all came at second-hand; and it was against such artificial and outworn conventions that the "Romantic Poets" raised the standard of revolt. Their innovations followed two separate lines. In the first place, they abandoned the old threadbare subjects and sought their inspiration in more fruitful fields. The enchanted atmosphere of mediæval legend gave Coleridge his idea of "Christabel" and Keats his "La Belle Dame sans Merci". The old-world ballad was revived in the "Ancient Mariner"; and Sir Walter Scott drew upon the folk-lore of the Highlands for his "Lady of the Lake".¹ This escape from the bondage of the classic models to the more congenial element of native poetry produced at once a freer and more natural art. Originality was recovered at a stroke. In these romantic tales of love-lorn maidens, elfin castles, and mysterious dooms, the imagination kindled to more genuine emotions; and these poets sang no longer to satisfy a formula, but rather to express the beauty of their inmost thoughts. So, along with their new choice of actual subject, they combined also a new outlook on the world. They attempted to see things with their own eyes—men as God had made them, Nature as she is. The beautiful in landscapes had for them a special fascination; and, just as the rising artists Constable and Turner were abandoning the cut-and-dried recipes of earlier painters for a more faithful reproduction of the sunshine and the cloud, so with the poets there was a sincere endeavour to study natural objects for themselves. The result is to be seen in Shelley's odes to the "West Wind" and the "Skylark," in Keats's "Autumn," or in Coleridge's sonnet on the clouds. But the most thorough-going student of them all was Wordsworth. He withdrew himself into the wilds of the Lake district to be alone with Nature, and he carried his enthusiasm to such a pitch that

¹ Robert Burns, the Ayrshire poet, had worked independently on the same lines. He was a true son of "nature"—a common ploughman's son; and his art was "natural" in a more genuine sense than the more studied "Naturalism" of Coleridge or Wordsworth.

it became with him a theory. He held that to be "natural" a poet must be plain, and that in telling of simple country folk and country things he must make use of none but the simplest and most ordinary words. This theory, unhappily, he carried much too far. It produced a large number of indifferent poems, such as "We are Seven," "Peter Bell," and "The Fountain"; and, not altogether unjustly, it made him the laughing-stock of critics and the butt of parodists for many years to come.¹ Wordsworth, however, fought on in the face of criticism; and the cause for which he and his fellow-poets had been striving prevailed in the long run. Keats, whom the cruelty of the critics is generally reputed to have killed, has since his death been placed by popular consent among the first of all our poets. Shelley too died young, but he too was soon famous. Wordsworth lived on, to be appointed in old age as Poet Laureate and to be acknowledged perhaps the greatest of the three. When he forgot his laboured effort to be "natural," and expressed his thoughts in the language which came most natural to himself, then indeed it was a different matter. Few poets have entered more deeply into the beauty of flowers, and birds, and woodland scenery, than the author of "Daffodils," and "Tintern Abbey," and the still more celebrated "Ode".

Yet natural scenery is but one side, and not, perhaps, the chief side, of existence. The proper study of mankind, as Pope remarked, is man; and it would be absurd, while discussing the literature of poets, to pass over in silence the birth

¹ Parodies of Wordsworth are numberless; and it is easy to ape the artificial simplicity of his "natural poems". This, for instance, is a well-known parody:—

They got into a hackney coach
And trotted down the street;
I saw them go; one horse was blind;
The tails of both hung down behind,
Their shoes were on their feet.

Wordsworth's own poems, however, can supply absurdities which outdo any parody; such as this stanza from the "Huntsman":—

"Few months of life has he in store,
As he to you will tell;
For still the more he works, the more
Do his weak ankles swell".

of the English Novel. The novel came quite suddenly, and in a short time had made an extraordinarily rapid growth. In the forties and fifties the foundations had been laid by the great trio, Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett. Goldsmith and Sterne had carried on the work. Sir Walter Scott had extended its range yet further, while, at the same time, increasing its popularity; and by the end of the great wars Jane Austen was writing what many have considered the most consummate novels of the English tongue. Here human character is drawn with such fidelity that Miss Austen can tell us much about the people of her day that no mere historian can ever truly tell. Her scope, it is true, was strictly limited. She describes the humdrum trivialities of life in the genteel family of small town or country-side. Neither to her own contemporaries nor to ourselves did she endeavour to reveal the minds and habits of any other class. Yet the scope of the novel could not long remain thus narrow. Soon enough its search-light was certain to be turned upon other strata of society; and those who had been interested in the fashionable gossip of Miss Austen's gentlemen and ladies would one day be interested to hear the tale of *Oliver Twist* and the thieves' kitchen, of the slums, the debtors' prison, and the underworld of towns. In short, the novel was an instrument—above all in such hands as those of Dickens—peculiarly adapted to the task of showing one class how other classes lived. Its essential function was to tell the truth, whether pleasant or unpleasant; and never did the truth need telling more than in the year of grace 1815. The capital blunder of the eighteenth century had been a failure of sympathy between the rich and the poor; and the worst of it was that this lamentable breach was something new in England. Your mediæval landlord was often a close man where his feudal rights were touched, but he was seldom churlish. He knew the peasants and lived cheek by jowl with them, and, as Chaucer shows, there was an easy familiarity between all ranks and stations. In Shakespeare's world it is the same, and high and low bandy good-humoured jests without servility upon the one hand or

condescension on the other. But, whether it were the influx of new wealth and the increasing power of money, or whatever were the cause of it, the eighteenth century magnate began to cultivate an air of self-conscious dignity, to stand aloof upon a pedestal, and to look down contemptuously on the poor folk—the phrase is new—of the “lower classes”. So those whose peculiar duty it was, as governors, to do so had never learnt to know or trust their fellow-men. It was to take another fifty, perhaps a hundred, years before the mistake should be discovered or the neglected lesson learnt—and who shall say that it has been fully mastered even now?

SUMMARIES

I. WILLIAM III. Stadtholder of Holland, 1672-1702 ; King of England, 1689-1702.

A. William's Position as King

- (i) Limitations of his power laid down by Parliament in *Declaration of Rights*; (a) Regular Parliaments; (b) Crown not to "dispense" laws; (c) no standing-army without Parliament's leave; (d) no unauthorised taxes.
- (ii) William's authority nevertheless great, (a) thanks to strong character and long experience as ruler of Dutch; (b) because he was able to play off rival Whigs and Tories against each other.

B. William and Scotland

- (i) Though Presbyterian Lowlands side with William, *John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee*, raises Highland army for James.
- 1689 (ii) They rout General Mackay's force in pass of *Killiecrankie*; but, Dundee being killed in battle, revolt dies out.
- (iii) Pardon offered to all Scots who take oath to William before end of 1689.
- (iv) *Macdonald of Glencoe* failing to take the oath, his enemies, the *Duke of Argyll* and the *Master of Stair* (Secretary of State for Scotland), plot revenge.
- (v) In pursuance of an order signed by William, troops billeted on Macdonalds slaughter them in cold blood.

C. William and Ireland

- 1689 (i) James appears in *Dublin* with troops lent by Louis XIV.
- (ii) Protestants of Ulster driven into towns; and in *Londonderry* besieged for 105 days, till relieved by convoy of food ships.
- 1690 (iii) William lands at *Carrickfergus* with mixed army of Dutch, Swedes, June Germans, and English; occupies Belfast; and marches south on Dublin.
- July 1 (iv) Forcing passage of river *Boyne*, he defeats James decisively.
- (v) By cruel Penal Laws, Catholic Irish forbidden to hold public office or intermarry with Protestants.
- (vi) Jealous English Parliament cripples Ireland's trade (even Ulster cloth trade) by forbidding importation.

D. Whigs and Tories

N.B.—Tories = Chiefly landed aristocracy reinstated at Restoration of Charles II, standing for (a) strong monarchy (Stuart for preference); (b) supremacy of Established Church; (c) sympathy with France.

Whigs = Commercial party first organised by Shaftesbury against Charles II, standing for (a) Supremacy of Parliament over King; (b) liberty for Non-conformist sects; (c) enmity to Catholic despotism of Louis XIV.

- (i) Though called to throne by Whigs, William restrains their desire for revenge on political enemies; and with Tories' aid passes *Act of Grace* to all past offenders.
- (ii) With Whigs' aid passes *Act of Toleration* to all sects (though Test Act and Corporation Act remain in force).
- (iii) William, gaining general support from country's fear of James's return, institutes freer public life, by liberty of speech and of the press.

II. WILLIAM AND FRANCE

A. Power of Louis XIV

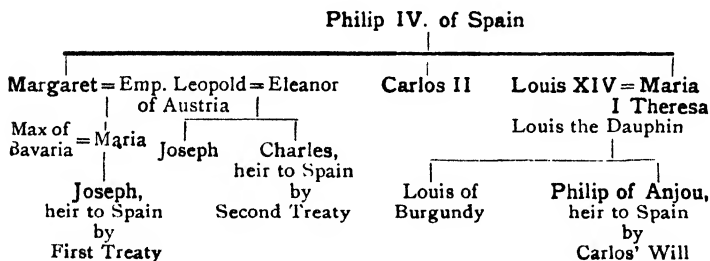
- (i) *Richelieu* (1624-42) humbled Austria by backing German Protestants in Thirty Years War.
- (ii) *Mazarin* (1643-61) acquired *Alsace* for France (Treaty of Westphalia, 1648).
- (iii) With aid of *Colbert*, Louis (1643-1715) builds up fleet and army employing Marshals *Turenne*, *Condé*, and fortress-builder *Vauban*.
- 1681 (iv) Seizes *Strasbourg* from Austria and plans attack on Spanish Netherlands.
- (v) After partial success in 1668 his renewal of attack is countered by resistance of Dutch under William.
- 1672 (vi) William forms League of Protestant States against France, and for this purpose welcomes his accession to English throne.

B War with France (1692-95)

- (i) Louis having sent French troops to help James in Ireland, William forms fresh league of Holland, Brandenburg, Hanover, Savoy, and England. Even Spain and Austria (though Catholic) are ready to join against old enemy.
- 1690 (ii) By Sea—(a) *Torrington*, near *Beachy Head*, is forced to retire before superior French fleet of *de Tourville*.
- 1692 (b) *Lord Russell* wins brilliant victory off *Cape La Hague*, thus securing Channel for transport of troops to Flanders.
- (iii) By Land—(a) Louis captures frontier forts of Spanish Netherlands: *Mons* in '91, *Namur* in '92.
- 1695 (b) William, though losing battles, recaptures *Namur*.
- (c) Louis exhausted by wars on other fronts as well.
- 1697 (iv) Louis agrees by *Treaty of Ryswick* to abandon *Lorraine* and *Luxemburg* (though retaining *Alsace* and *Strasbourg*) and to acknowledge William as King of England.

C. The Problem of the Spanish Succession

- (i) William, fearing lest Spanish lands should pass, on death of childless *Carlos II*, to one of Louis' family, arranges with Louis in advance :—
- (a) By *First Partition Treaty* bulk of Spanish lands to go (through Carlos' sister, Margaret, wife of *Austrian Emperor*) to her grandson *Joseph*, child-heir of *Bavaria*.
 - (b) On death of Joseph, by *Second Partition Treaty*, bulk of lands to go to younger son of Austrian Emperor (by another wife), the '*Archduke Charles* : *Naples and Milan* to go (through Carlos' sister, Maria Theresa, wife of Louis XIV) to her grandson, *Philip of Anjou*.
- 1700 (ii) Carlos II dies and leaves will bequeathing all his dominions to *Philip of Anjou* on condition that France and Spain should never be merged.
- (iii) Breaking all previous promises to William, Louis seizes chance of getting Spain into his power, occupies Spanish Netherlands with French troops, and upon death of James II recognises his son, the "Old Pretender," as English King.
- 1702 (iv) William, while preparing for fresh war on Louis, dies of fall from his horse.



III. ANNE (1702-1714)

Second daughter of James II, married to a nonentity, Prince George of Denmark: herself a weak character, mainly influenced by *Sarah Jennings, Duchess of Marlborough*.

A. War of Spanish Succession in Four Theatres

N.B.—Though attacked by ring of enemies, Louis XIV possesses great advantage of interior lines (cp. Germany in 1914) and is thus able to take offensive in all theatres.

- (i) In SPAIN, which is occupied in accordance with Carlos' will by Philip of Anjou.
 - (a) Spanish, for the most part, welcome the French King.
 - 1705 (b) *Lord Peterborough*, with small British force, captures *Barcelona*, thereby securing *Catalonia* and *Valencia*.
 - 1706 (c) Another British army from allied Portugal drives Philip from *Madrid*.
 - (d) Spaniards rally against us, and *Peterborough* leaves Spain.
 - (e) British fleet gains command of Mediterranean, and Admiral *Rooke* captures *Gibraltar* by surprise assault.
 - 1704 (ii) In SPANISH NETHERLANDS, which Louis at first overruns:—
 - 1702-04 Marlborough appearing with small force pushes French back slowly on line *Antwerp-Namur*.
 - (iii) In ITALY, where Louis attempts to seize Milan under Carlos' will:—
 - (a) Austrian troops under *Prince Eugene* offer considerable resistance.
 - (b) Eugene recalled to watch French Rhine army of *Tallard*.
 - (c) Louis' army, though intended to assist in attack on *Vienna*, is detained by *Savoy's* defection to allied side.
 - (iv) In CENTRAL EUROPE, where *Maximilian, Elector of Bavaria*, supports him:—
 - 1703 (a) Louis plans that Franco-Bavarian army under *Marcin*, with other army from Italy, should march against Austrian capital, *Vienna*.
 - 1704 (b) Without disclosing his intention, Marlborough leaves small force to cover *Villeroi* in Flanders; marches up Rhine across *Tallard's* front and, joining *Prince of Baden's* German force, strikes south-east against Bavaria.
 - May (c) Reaching Danube, Marlborough seizes bridge-town of *Donauwörth* and ravages Bavaria almost to gates of *Munich*, so that the Elector meditates peace.
 - (d) *Tallard* joins *Marcin's* Franco-Bavarian army and threatens Marlborough's line of communications across Danube.
 - (e) Marlborough hurries north; recrosses Danube; is joined by Eugene and, meeting enemy at *Blenheim*, inflicts crushing defeat.

B The Decisive Struggle in Flanders

- (i) Despite sluggishness of allies, Marlborough presses French continuously.
- 1706 (ii) Wins great victory at *Ramillies*, and pushes French back on their frontier.
- 1708 (iii) After fresh victory at *Oudenarde*, crosses French frontier and captures *Lille*.
- 1709 (iv) By great national effort new French army raised and sent north under *Villars*.
- (v) Having taken *Tournai*, Marlborough invests *Mons*.
- (vi) *Villars*, coming up to its relief, entrenches in woods of *Malplaquet*; Marlborough attacks and routs him, but his own losses (20,000 men) prevent further advance into France.

C. Fall of Marlborough and Peace of Utrecht

- (i) *Mrs. Masham* (tool of pro-French Tories) supplants Duchess of Marlborough in confidence of Anne.
- (ii) By their arrest of High Church Tory preacher, *Sacheverell*, Whigs alienate public opinion and lose office.
- (iii) New Tory Ministers, *Harley* (Earl of Oxford) and *St. John* (Viscount Bolingbroke) begin secret negotiations with France.
- 1712 (iv) Army recalled from Flanders; Marlborough disgraced.
- 1714 (v) *Treaty of Utrecht* signed:—
 - (a) PHILIP to be King of *Spain* and *New World* on condition of renouncing all claim to French throne.
 - (b) CHARLES, now Emperor of Austria, receives as compensation *Milan*, *Naples*, *Sardinia*, and *Spanish Netherlands*.
 - (c) ENGLAND receives *Gibraltar*, *Minorca*, *Newfoundland*, *Nova Scotia*.

Main Result : By acquiring Mediterranean bases, and by her building activity during the war, England attains a definite supremacy at sea, eclipsing both France and her old rival and recent ally, the Dutch.

Special Subjects : Character of Marlborough; Military tactics of period; Battle of *Blenheim*.

IV. THE HANOVERIANS AND THE STUARTS

[N.B.—As grandson of Charles I's sister and the Elector Palatine, George, Elector of Hanover, is invited over in preference to James II's "warming-pan" son, the "Old Pretender".]

A. The Fifteen

- 1707 (i) Scotland deprived of separate Parliament and "united" with England, though retaining separate Law Courts and Church, and some exemption from English taxes.
- 1715 (ii) Under this grievance Scots rise for Old Pretender in Highlands and Lowlands.
- (iii) *Earl of Mar* fights inconclusively with *Argyll* at *Sheriffmuir*.
- (iv) Owing to Pretender's lack of spirit, revolt collapses.

B. The Forty-five

- 1745 (i) During war of Austrian Succession Old Pretender's Son, *Charles Edward* (Young Pretender), on coming of age, lands in West Scotland.
- (ii) Highland clans under *Lochiel* and others drive back English garrison, occupy *Edinburgh*, and defeat *Cope* at *Prestonpans*.
- (iii) Pretender marches through England; but, though Government is in a panic, retreats on reaching *Derby*.
- 1746 (iv) Retires into Highlands and is crushed by *Cumberland* at *Culloden*.
- (v) By aid of *Flora Macdonald* escapes in disguise to France.

Result: Though Scots long retain their national grievance, they settle down; Highland regiments enrolled in British army; Trade and Industry flourish; Scotsmen take increasing part in political and intellectual life of England.

V. GEORGE I (1715-1727); GEORGE II (1727-1760)

A. Whig Supremacy

- (i) The rebellion of 1715 having discredited pro-Stuart Tories, the Whigs enjoy uninterrupted power for 45 years.
- (ii) Whig magnates, though often merchants by origin, turn land-owners, and by controlling nomination and election of members, become complete masters of Parliament.
- (iii) A system is developed whereby all posts, high or low, in administration are filled by Whig nominees, and corruption becomes general.

B. Cabinet System

- (i) George I and George II, both being ignorant of English ways, cease to attend meetings of Cabinet.
- (ii) Cabinet, which hitherto had been chosen by King, irrespective of party, is now chosen by Prime Minister from his own party only.
- (iii) Sir Robert Walpole develops this double system of Whig supremacy and Cabinet government.

C. Financial Situation

- (i) Growth of trade had produced a new class of "capitalist" merchants, who often united in "companies" for large-scale enterprise.
- (ii) Banks to assist such ventures begun in seventeenth century (*Bank of England*, 1694).
- (iii) By borrowing money for war purposes from private persons the State had contracted huge *National Debt* (£52,000,000 in 1715).
- (iv) *South Sea Company* founded to trade with South America under Terms of Utrecht Treaty.
 - (a) Company's directors arrange, with approval of Ministers, to take over National Debt Stock from its holders in exchange for South Sea Shares.
 - (b) Wild speculation leads, on discovery of poorness of South Sea prospects, to a big financial smash, ruining thousands.
- 1721 (c) Whig Ministers, *Stanhope* and *Sunderland*, disgraced for their connivance in the deal.
- (v) *Walpole* called to office to reorganise national finance.

D. Walpole's Ministry (1721-1742)

- (i) Maintains peace at all costs, and cuts down military forces.
- (ii) Reduces rate of interest given on National Debt and forms a "sinking fund" to pay off the Debt itself.
- (iii) Abandoning old idea of excluding foreign imports for protection of home industries, he adopts a policy of freer trade and removes many export and import taxes.
- 1733 (iv) Hoping to increase volume of trade, he proposes to substitute for *customs duty* on importation of tea, sugar, wines, tobacco, an *excise duty* on their consumption.

- (v) Great outcry from nation (who largely evade customs duties by smuggling), but, though forced to withdraw his proposal for wine and tobacco, he succeeds with tea and sugar.

Result: Enormous increase in British trade; exports double in 25 years; thus increased wealth provides funds which enable us to win subsequent wars.

E. Literature from 1700 to 1750

- (i) Greater political liberty opens way for freer discussion in coffee-houses and clubs and for newspapers and pamphleteers.
- (ii) Prose authors (mostly pamphleteers and essay-writers).
 - (a) *Sir Richard Steele* (1672-1729) writes for Whigs and publishes many essays in the "Tatler" and "Spectator".
 - (b) *Joseph Addison* (1672-1719) wins reputation by poem on *Blenheim* (the "Campaign"); taken up and given preferment by Whigs; joins with Steele in editing papers and in writing essays (e.g. about *Sir Roger de Coverley*).
 - (c) *Daniel Defoe* (1661-1731) writes pamphlets for Whigs; also the "Journal of the Plague" and "Robinson Crusoe".
 - (d) *Jonathan Swift* (1667-1745), Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin, supports Tories; writes bitter satires upon contemporary society, e.g. "Gulliver's Travels".
- (iii) Poetry suffers from excessive imitation of classical models, under influence of *Alexander Pope* (1688-1744) who translates the "Iliad" and writes numerous poems in Heroic Couplets, e.g. "Rape of the Lock".
- (iv) Tendency towards this excessive classicism fostered especially by *Dr. Samuel Johnson* (1709-1784).
 - (a) Made specially famous by *Boswell's Biography*.
 - (b) Author of "English Dictionary," "Rasselas," etc.
 - (c) Great talker, much loved by brilliant circle (Reynolds, Goldsmith, Burke, Gibbon, Garrick, etc.)
 - (d) A Tory and a great enemy of Whig hypocrisy.

VI. HISTORY OF COLONIAL EXPANSION

N.B.—General character of Colonies.

- (i) Government encourages, but seldom initiates, leaving all to private enterprise.
- (ii) Spain and Portugal anticipate us in discovery, and so exclude us from Africa and S. America.
- (iii) Overpopulated India offers opportunity for trade-depôts only; under populated America for large-scale emigration.

A. Age of Exploration and Piracy (1500-1600)

- 1492 (i) After Columbus's discovery of West Indies and S. America, *Cabot*
- 1497 of *Bristol* discovers N. American coast.
- (ii) North East passage to India sought by *Chancellor* (1553) and *Willoughby* (1553); North-West by *Frobisher* (1576).
- (iii) *Drake* and *Hawkins* brothers prey on Spanish trade, but no attempt made to colonise until in 1583 *Sir Humphrey Gilbert* claims *Newfoundland* for British Crown.

B. Age of Colonisation—North America

I. Royalist "Plantation" settlements on southern coasts (1600-1750).

- (i) VIRGINIA (named after Elizabeth).
 - 1585 (a) Expedition sent by *Raleigh* fails.
 - 1607 (b) *London Company* renews enterprise; but too much gold hunting instead of agriculture.
 - (c) *John Smith* reorganises settlers; land parcelled out; women introduced; tobacco planted.
 - (d) By 1660 population rises to 40,000 despite hostile Indians.
 - (ii) MARYLAND (named after Queen Henrietta Maria).
 - 1634 Under *Lord Baltimore*, this extension made north of Virginia.
 - (iii) CAROLINA (named after Charles II).
 - 1663 Extension south of Virginia made by Royalist Proprietors.
 - (iv) GEORGIA (named after George II).
 - 1732 *Oglethorpe* extends south again, partly to provide for poor emigrants, partly as outpost against Spanish *Florida*.
- [*N.B.*—General character: worked by aristocratic proprietors by use of negroes imported from Africa.]

II. Puritan Settlements on northern coasts (1600-1700).

- (i) NEW PLYMOUTH.
- 1620 (a) Puritan exiles in *Mayflower* land near *Cape Cod*.
- (b) Settlement at first organised on socialistic basis.
- (c) But flourishes only when private ownership allowed.
- (ii) MASSACHUSETTS.
- 1630 (a) Founded by fresh wave of emigrants driven out by *Laud's* persecutions.
- (b) 20,000 in all crossed before Civil War in 1641.
- (iii) CONNECTICUT AND NEW HAVEN.
- 1633 Formed into separate states by settlers pushing inland.
- (iv) RHODE ISLAND.
- Founded off coast south of *Cape Cod* by *Roger Williams*, a minister desiring fuller religious liberty than other colonies allowed.

[*N.B.*—General character: pertinacious settlers; trade in fur and salt fish; eventually united in Confederacy for Central Parliament and for defence against Indians.]

III. Deliberate National Aggression (1650-1750).

- (i) JAMAICA.
 - 1655 (a) Cromwell, during war against Spain, sends *Penn* and *Venables*, who, failing against *San Domingo*, capture unoccupied *Jamaica*.
 - (b) Buccaneers (e.g. *Henry Morgan*) use it to prey on Spanish trade.
 - (c) Rich products make its trade very valuable.
 - (ii) NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY.
 - 1664 Taken from *Dutch* during war of Charles II, renamed, and serve to link up Northern (Puritan) with Southern (Royalist) groups.
 - (iii) PENNSYLVANIA.
 - 1683 Quaker *Penn* encouraged by Charles II to push inland from New York, and founds new state with capital *Philadelphia*.
- IV French Rivalry.
- 1535 (i) *Acadia* (Nova Scotia) colonised via St. Lawrence River.
 - 1608 (ii) *Champlain* founds *Quebec* and *Montreal*.
 - (iii) Large schemes initiated by Louis XIV's Minister, *Colbert* (1661-72).
 - 1682 (iv) *La Salle* travels from Great Lakes via Ohio River to mouth of *Mississippi*, and claims river basin for France (*Louisiana*).
 - c. 1740 (v) Soldiers sent out and forts built to encircle English settlements from inland.

General Character: Enterprise proceeds from Home Government; French nation apathetic; aggressive policy of officials and alliance with Indians (cp. *Dupleix*).

C. Trade Settlements in INDIA

I. Native History.

- (i) Bulk of inhabitants are Hindoos, greatly oppressed by caste-system and Brahmin priest-aristocracy.
- 1050 to 1500 (ii) Mohammedans from North invade in successive waves.
- 1526 (iii) The last of these, *Babar the Mongol*, becomes overlord of North India, which his successors, the great Moguls, rule from *Delhi*.
- 1707 (iv) The Mogul *Aurangzebe* dies and the Empire begins to split up, its Viceroy or Nabobs becoming independent; Mahratta hordes spread terror.

II. Early Trade Settlements.

- 1505 (i) *Vasco da Gama* being first in the field, Portugal gains initial monopoly, but, being merged with Spain at end of sixteenth century, shares in her decline.
- 1600 (ii) English *East India Company* obtains a footing and founds depôts at *Bombay*, *Madras* (Fort St. David), *Calcutta* (Fort St. William).
- (iii) Our chief rivals are (a) the Dutch at *Java*, *Ceylon*, and other islands; (b) the French at *Chandernagore* and *Pondicherry*.

III. The French activity.

- (i) On break-up of Mogul Empire, French Government extends influence by alliance with independent Nabobs (e.g. against Mahrattas).
- 1741 (ii) *Dupleix* goes out as Governor and drills native soldiers under French officers.
- (iii) British Government inactive; *East India Company* maintains only small bodyguard.

VII. WAR OF AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION

A. Quarrel between England and Spain

- (i) The two kinsmen Louis XV of France and Philip of Anjou, now King of Spain, secretly leaguings against England.
- 1739 (ii) British traders molested by Spanish in S. America (e.g. Jenkins' ear); nation demands revenge.
- (iii) Walpole, despite his love of peace, is forced into war; *Portobello* taken from Spain.
- 1742 (iv) After ensuing failures Walpole retires: succeeded by *Carteret*, who reverses Walpole's policy of British isolation.

B. Quarrel between Prussia and Austria

- (i) Rise of Prussia.
- 1713-1740 (a) *Frederic William I* builds up strong army.
- 1740 (b) His son, *Frederic II* (the "Great"), succeeds to Brandenburg and Prussia.
- (c) Ambitious and unscrupulous, he prepares to turn army to use.
- (ii) Weakness of Austria.
- Emperor *Charles*, before dying, bequeaths Austria to his daughter, *Maria Theresa*, and gets European powers to guarantee her throne by *Pragmatic Sanction*.
- 1740 (iii) *Frederic* attacks *Maria Theresa* and seizes *Silesia*.

C. Policy of Carteret

Combination of England with a united Germany (i.e. Austria and Prussia, etc.) against French aggression.

- (i) He reconciles *Frederic* and *Maria Theresa* at cost of leaving *Silesia* in *Frederic's* possession.
- (ii) Anglo-Austro-Hanoverian army collected to defend *Austrian* (since 1715) *Netherlands* against French: marches towards Danube, and narrowly escapes defeat at *Dettingen*.
- 1743
- 1744 (iii) British dislike of these foreign entanglements leads to *Carteret's* fall.

D. Drawn War with France

- 1744 (i) *Frederic* again quarrels with *Maria Theresa*.
- (ii) Incompetent *Pelham* brothers (Henry, and Thomas, Duke of Newcastle) fail to support Austria.
- 1745 (iii) After defeat at *Fontenoy*, our army brought home from *Netherlands* owing to menace of Young Pretender: *Netherlands* overrun by French.
- (iv) In India *Dupleix* captures *Madras*; but our American settlers capture *Louisburg* from French.
- 1748 (v) France accepts peace of *Aix-la-Chapelle*.
- (a) *Madras* and *Louisburg* exchanged.
- (b) *Frederic* gets *Silesia*.
- (c) *Netherlands* go back to Austria.

Results:—France suffers badly in trade, etc., but, owing to fear of Prussia, Austria is preparing to join France; and *we thus lose our most valuable ally in Europe*.

VIII. SEVEN YEARS

	Political	Naval	Continental
1751	<i>Henry Pelham</i> is Prime Minister.		
1754	On his death his brother (<i>Newcastle</i>) succeeds him.	(1755)	(Autumn) France and Austria, etc., combine against Prussia.
1756	(May) War Declared. (Nov.) <i>Newcastle</i> succeeded by <i>Devonshire</i> and <i>Pitt</i> .	(June) <i>Byng</i> fails to save <i>Minorca</i> .	(Aug.) <i>Frederic</i> overruns Saxony.
1757	(April) <i>Pitt</i> dismissed. (June) <i>Pitt</i> returns.	Raid on <i>Rochefort</i> .	(i) (July) <i>Cumberland</i> , beaten at <i>Hastenbeck</i> , capitulates at <i>Klosterserven</i> . (ii) <i>Frederic</i> invades Bohemia; but soon exhausted. (iii) <i>Frederic</i> defeats French at <i>Rosbach</i> (Nov.) and Austrians at <i>Leuthen</i> (Dec.).
1758		(i) Raids on <i>St. Malo</i> , <i>Havre</i> , <i>Cherbourg</i> . (ii) French plan to invade England.	(i) <i>Ferdinand of Brunswick</i> drives French back from Hanover to Rhine. (ii) <i>Frederic</i> recovering, though hard pressed.
1759		(i) <i>Boscawen</i> pursues and beats <i>Toulon</i> fleet at <i>Lagos Bay</i> (Aug.). (ii) <i>Brest</i> fleet gets out: but beaten by <i>Hawke</i> at <i>Quiberon Bay</i> (Nov.).	(i) <i>Frederic</i> beaten by Russians at <i>Kunersdorf</i> (Aug.). (ii) <i>Ferdinand</i> restores position by defeating French at <i>Minden</i> (Aug.).
1760	(Oct.) <i>George II</i> dies. <i>George III</i> hostile to <i>Pitt</i> .		
1761	(Oct.) Fall of <i>Pitt</i> : succeeded by <i>Bute</i> .		
1762	(Jan.) War against Spain.		
1763	(Feb.) Peace	signed at <i>Paris</i> .	<i>Frederic</i> left in lurch; but makes separate peace with Austria.

WAR [1756-1763].

	America	India
1751		To draw French from attacking our ally at <i>Trichinopoly</i> , Clive takes and holds <i>Arcot</i> . French lose influence in CARNATIC.
1754	<i>Fort Duquesne</i> built by French.	Dupleix recalled.
1755	<i>Braddock</i> marches against it : but is ambushed and routed (June).	Clive made Governor of Madras.
1756		(June) <i>Surajah</i> seizes <i>Calcutta</i> . <i>Black Hole</i> . (Dec.) Clive retakes <i>Calcutta</i> .
1757	English and Scottish regiments sent out by Pitt.	(June) Clive defeats <i>Surajah</i> at <i>Plassey</i> ; and BENGAL under <i>Mir Jaffar</i> becomes British dependancy.
1758	(i) <i>Abercromby's</i> overland advance fails at <i>Ticonderoga</i> . (ii) <i>Amherst</i> and <i>Wolfe</i> (by sea) take <i>Louisburg</i> .	Clive sends force which captures <i>M suliputani</i> , thus bringing over the DECCAN to our side.
1759	(i) <i>Wolfe</i> arrives at <i>Quebec</i> (June); captures it (Sept.) (ii) <i>Amherst</i> fails to come through by overland route.	Clive returns to England.
1760	<i>Amherst</i> takes <i>Montreal</i> . Canada conquered.	(Jan.) <i>Cooté</i> beats French under <i>Lally</i> at <i>Wandewash</i> .
1761		<i>Pondicherry</i> captured: French power in India permanently broken.
1762	<i>Havana</i> (in Cuba) taken from Spain, and <i>Martinique</i> from French.	Expedition sent against Spanish <i>Philippines</i> and takes <i>Manilla</i> .
1763		

A HISTORY OF ENGLAND

TERMS OF TREATIES

A. In Europe

- (i) *Minorca* returned to England.
- (ii) *Silesia* retained by Frederic.

B. In America

- (i) *Canada*, part of *Louisiana*, *Florida* (from Spain) go to England.
- (ii) *Martinique* and *Havana* given back to France and Spain.

C. In East

- (i) *Indian* possessions secured to us; French allowed depots only and no forts.
- (ii) *Manilla* returned to Spain.

Special Subjects;—French and British resources in India and America; the Campaign of Quebec; Character of Pitt; ambitions of George III.

CAREER OF PITT (CHATHAM)

A. Early Life

- (i) Born 1708; takes a commission as cornet in Dragoons.
- (ii) M.P. for *Old Sarum* (1735); attacks Walpole.
- (iii) Paymaster of Forces under Pelham, but refuses all bribes.

B. Period of Power

First Ministry: Nov., 1756—Apr., 1757.

Second Ministry: June, 1757—Oct., 1761.

C. Policy in War

- (i) Use of British sea power:—
 - (a) To stop French reinforcements to Canada or India.
 - (b) To strangle French trade.
 - (c) To detain French forces on coast by naval raids.
- (ii) British money given freely to support Prussia and Hanover.
- (iii) British force used to defend Hanover, covering Frederic's flank.
- (iv) French settlements in India and America to be captured and a *British Empire to be built up overseas*.

IX. SECESSION OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES

A. Break-up of Whig Supremacy

- (i) Though still supreme in Parliament, Whigs are split into numerous factions.
- (ii) Consequently their ministries are short-lived:
 - '62-'63 (a) *Bute*: driven out of office by unpopularity of the Peace of Paris.
 - '63-'65 (b) *Grenville*: loses public favour by his prosecution of *Wilkes* for a journalistic attack on the King.
 - '65-'66 (c) *Rockingham*: offends George III by supporting *Wilkes*.
 - '66-'67 (d) *Pitt*: (now Earl of Chatham) retires, from ill health.

- '67-'70 (e) His colleague, *Grafton*, is the last of Whig premiers.
 1770 (iii) George III, having built up a party of his own supporters (King's Friends"), brings in a Tory Government under *Lord North*.

B. Attitude of England towards Colonies

[N.B.—Though mother country's interest considered paramount, British policy was not so selfish as that of other nations towards their colonies.]

- (i) Colonies mainly self-governing, but with a Crown Deputy sent out from England.
- (ii) Taxes in which colonials have no say imposed by England for upkeep of army and fleet.
- (iii) Trade to be conducted with England alone (by *Navigation Act of 1651*) and all imports likely to compete with British industries ruthlessly discouraged.

C. Beginnings of the Quarrel

- (i) The Stamp Tax :—
 - 1765 (a) To pay for cost of recent war *Grenville* takes measures against smuggling in America and imposes new *Stamp Tax*.
 - (b) Colonies refuse to buy the stamps on principle.
 - (c) *Rockingham* withdraws Stamp Tax, but reasserts the right to tax.
- (ii) The Tea Tax.
 - (a) Under Pitt, *Townshend* taxes paper, glass, and tea.
 - (b) Colonials retaliate by boycotting British goods.
 - 1770 (c) Dispatch of troops by *Grafton* leads to *Boston Massacre*.
- (iii) Boston's lead.
 - (a) Though other taxes withdrawn, Tea Tax retained.
 - (b) Arrangement made by *Grafton* to cheapen tea for colonies.
 - 1773 (c) Colonials refuse "cheap" tea and *Boston* youths throw it overboard.
- (iv) Boston's Punishment.
 - (a) Boston port closed; Massachusetts deprived of self-government.
 - 1774 (b) Other colonies supply Boston with food and, sending delegates to Congress at *Philadelphia*, issue *Declaration of Rights*.
 - (c) *North* essays a compromise too late; *Gage's* troops attacked and defeated by colonial militia at *Lexington*.
 - 1775

Result :—

- 1776 *Declaration of Independence* of the American Colonies, 4th July.

D. The War

I. First Phase before France's entry (1775-1778).

- 1775 (i) Lord Howe captures *Bunker's Hill* at unnecessary cost.
- 1776 (ii) Enters *New York* and drives *Washington* back into interior.
- (iii) Junction between Howe and *Burgoyne* (from Canada) planned via Hudson River, but, Howe having diverted his forces against *Philadelphia*, *Burgoyne* is surrounded and capitulates at *Saratoga*.
- 1777

Result: First France, then Spain and Holland enter the war against us.

II. *Second Phase.* (1778-1782.)

- (i) On the seas :—
 - 1782 (a) Though French attempt capture of our West Indian islands, Rodney holds his own and defeats enemy at *Battle of the Saints* by "breaking the line".
 - (b) *Gibraltar* held by *Elliott* against tremendous odds from 1779 to 1782.
- (ii) On the American mainland.
 - 1780 (a) *Cornwallis* lands in *Georgia* and, overrunning southern colonies, works up to Chesapeake Bay.
 - 1781 (b) While French fleet under Comte de Grasse cuts off Cornwallis from support by sea, Washington evades *Clinton* at New York and marching south overwhelms Cornwallis at *Yorktown*.
 - 1783 **Result:** Treaty of Versailles.
 - (a) *Florida* and *Minorca* ceded to Spain; some lesser West Indies to France.
 - (b) *Independence of the United States of America* recognised; Washington elected first President.

Special Subjects: George III's political methods: military resources of colonials and England: character of Washington.

X. INDIA

A. Clive's Governorship (1765-1767)

- (i) Clive regularises the administration of *Bengal*, taking over collection of taxes from the native ruler.
- (ii) Improves pay of E.I. Company's servants and tries to suppress corruption.
- (iii) On his return is attacked by Company shareholders (who think their profits affected), and, though acquitted, commits suicide from disappointment.

N.B.—In 1773 a *Regulating Act* passed providing

- (i) Appointments made by E.I. Company Directors to be submitted for approval of the Crown.
- (ii) Constitution to consist of (a) a *Governor-General* for all Indian possessions, with (b) a *Council of Four*, which has power to override him; (c) a *Supreme Court of Justice* independent of the Council.

B. Warren Hastings's Governorship (1774-1785)

- (i) His difficulties :—
 - 1775 (a) Though thoroughly versed in Eastern politics, Hastings is opposed from start by *Francis* and two other members of Council.
 - (b) These support charge of corruption brought against Hastings by a native *Nuncomar*; but *Impey*, as President of Supreme Court, removes Nuncomar by execution on old charge of felony.
 - 1780 (c) Francis and another of his opponents having departed, Hastings becomes master of the situation.

- (ii) His wars:—
- 1774 (a) *Mahrattas* plot with *Rohilla* tribe against our ally the *Vizier of Oude*; Hastings suppresses *Rohillas* ruthlessly, thereby securing peace in north for many years.
 - 1779 (b) British officials at *Bombay* support candidate for throne of *Poona*, and, when *Mahrattas* attack, Hastings sends troops from *Calcutta*, who retrieve situation.
 - 1780 (c) In south *Mahrattas* league with French and *Hyder Ali of Mysore*; Coote defeats Ali at *Porto Novo*, and, the French being worsted at sea, the danger is removed.
- (iii) His reforms:—
- (a) Reorganises finance, dividing *Bengal* into districts.
 - (b) Appoints British tax collectors in place of natives.
 - (c) Sets up native court in *Calcutta* and organises police.
- (iv) His impeachment:—
- (a) On his return, *Francis* and other enemies secure his impeachment.
 - 1787 (b) *Burke* eloquently urges numerous charges, e.g. the hanging of *Nuncomar*, treatment of *Rohillas*, etc.
 - (c) Acquittal after seven years; subsequently honoured in Parliament.
- N.B.—*India Bill of 1784 (younger Pitt)* institutes a system of dual control which lasts until *Mutiny*:—
- (a) Governor-General to be supreme over Council.
 - (b) Board of Control appointed by Parliament to direct main policy from London; while the E.I. Company's officials administer details on the spot.

D. Era of Conquest

- (i) *Lord Cornwallis* (1786-93) humbles *Tippoo of Mysore*.
 - 1793 (ii) Revolutionary France being now again at war with us, her agents stir up native princes against us and drill native troops.
 - 1798-1805 (iii) *Marquis Wellesley* thereby finds opportunity for fresh annexations.
 - 1799 (a) In south, *Tippoo* defeated by *Baird* and *Arthur Wellesley* (Duke of Wellington) at *Seringapatam*.
 - 1802 (b) In north, *Wellesley* gets *Vizier of Oude* to cede us *Rohilkund* and other territory.
 - 1803 (c) In centre, *Scindia*, the *Mahratta* chief, is defeated by *Wellesley* at *Assaye*.
 - (iv) The *Marquis of Hastings* finally overcomes *Mahrattas* and places all India at our feet (1814-23).
- Special subject*: Character of East India Company's rule.

XI. THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

A. The Advent of Machinery

- (i) Before 1760 manufacture mainly carried on by manual processes, though water and wind-power used for corn-mills, etc.
- (ii) From 1700 onwards scientific methods (e.g. rotation of crops, breeding of stock) applied to farming.
- (iii) Inventors begin about 1760 to devise machinery.
 - 1766 (a) In Spinning:—Automatic spindles in *Hargreaves'* "Spinning Jenny".
 - 1769 Methods of drawing thread fine improved by *Arkwright*; both
 - 1779 devices combined in *Crompton's* "Mule".
 - 1785 (b) In Weaving:—Automatic loom invented by *Cartwright*.
 - 1769 (c) Steam-engine:—Perfectd by *James Watt* for use at mine-heads and for driving looms, etc.
 - (d) Locomotives:—Marine engine made before 1800; railway engine, the "Rocket," built by *George Stephenson* (1829).
- (iv) Hand-workers, fearing loss of work, frequently break up machines.

B. Effect on Trade

- (i) Enormous increase in production of all sorts of fabrics.
- (ii) Cotton (previously excluded to protect wool-trade) admitted and manufactured in large quantities from 1770 onwards.
- (iii) Need of steel for machinery leads to exploitation of iron mines and of coal for smelting.
- (iv) This leads to increased manufacture of hardware, pins, nails, etc.

C. Effect on Industrial Conditions

- (i) The Factory.
 - (a) Until about 1700 men worked in *small workshops* under a master.
 - (b) After 1700 need for large-scale production introduces "*Domestic System*," whereby wholesale dealers give out material to employees to work up *at home*.
 - (c) After 1760 advent of machinery necessitated the grouping of employees in *large factories*.
- (ii) Shifting of Population.
 - (a) Ill-built mushroom towns spring up near factories.
 - (b) Difficulties of transport cause factories to be built near the mines.
 - (c) Since coal and iron are found mostly in north and west, the population shifts thither from south and east.
- (iii) Hence, whereas hitherto the towns of south and east had led the way, the new industrial centres of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and West Midlands become the most restless and progressive part of the community.

XII. THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

A. The States General, the Paris Mob and the Peasants (1789)

- 1789 (i) The national finance being bankrupt, Louis XVI summons the
 May obsolete "States-General" (Nobles, Clergy, and Commons) to
Versailles; there, finding themselves thwarted, the Commons repre-
 June sentatives vote themselves into a permanent "*National Assembly*".
 July 14 (ii) Hearing of dismissal of Necker, the popular finance minister, the
 Paris mob rises and captures the *Bastille*.
 (iii) The peasants rise, sack landowners' châteaux, and make land
 their own.
 Oct. (iv) Hunger-stricken Paris women march to Versailles and bring back
 King and Queen to *Tuilleries*.

B. Constitutional Reconstruction thwarted by Louis' Folly (1790-1792)

- (i) The "National Assembly," being given a clear field by flight of
 nobles, works to establish a limited monarchy and humble power
 of the Church.
 1791 (ii) Led astray by his Austrian Queen, Louis attempts flight to German
 June frontier, but is caught at *Varennes* and taken back a prisoner.
 1792 (iii) Intrigues of royal party with Austria and Prussia force Revolution-
 Spring aries to declare war.
 (iv) Mob, fearing King's escape, sack Tuilleries (Aug.) and massacre
 prisoners in jails (Sept.).
 Sept. (v) German army advances on Paris, but is turned back at *Valmy*.

C. The Convention (1792-1795) succeeds in place of Legislative Assembly
 appointed in '91 by National Assembly

[*N.B.*—More moderate *Girondists* (standing for France as a whole)
 are gradually outweighed by party of the "*Mountain*" (standing for
 supremacy of Paris) led by *Danton*, *Marat*, and *Robespierre*.]

- 1793 (i) The "Terror" begins under desperation at military crisis.
 (a) Louis XVI executed (Jan.), Marie Antoinette (Oct.).
 (b) Convention appoints small *Committee of Public Safety* to meet
 dangers.
 (c) Girondist leaders executed (June).
 (ii) The *First Coalition* of European powers against France.
 (a) In England Revolution at first meets with much sympathy
 (e.g. from Whigs, Fox, etc.).
 1793 (b) Shocked by Louis' death, opinion changes; England declares
 war in conjunction with Austria, Prussia, Holland, and Spain.
 (iii) *Robespierre* becomes virtual dictator, *Marat* being murdered (July,
 '93) and *Danton* executed (March, '94).
 (a) Reorganises calendar, renaming months, etc.
 (b) Abolishes Christianity, substituting worship of "Reason".
 (c) Meanwhile thousands of suspects are sent to guillotine.
 (d) *Robespierre* himself falls (July, '94).
 (iv) More moderate "Directory" supersedes the Convention, and turns
 from civil bloodshed to a crusade for the liberation of all oppressed
 peoples.

D. The Revolutionary Wars (from Feb. '93 onwards)

- (i) Gigantic military effort of France; conscription organised by *Carnot*.
- (ii) Her enemies dissipate their strength by attacking without unity of plan, e.g. England makes descents on Brittany, Flanders, and Toulon (though *Howe* defeats French Navy, 1st June, '94).
- (iii) One by one the members of *First Coalition* make separate peace:
 - (a) In '94, *Holland*.
 - (b) In '95, *Spain* and *Prussia*.
 - (c) In '96 *Austria*, when Napoleon, driving Austrians out of Italy by victory at *Rivoli*, marches on Vienna.
- 1797 (iv) Napoleon, having handed over Venice to Austria and formed *North Italian (Cisalpine) Republic* under French influence, returns to Paris with plans for the defeat of *England*, which is now left to face *France alone*.

XIII. NAPOLEON IN THE EAST**A. Egypt and the Nile**

- 1797 (i) On his return from Italy, the Revolutionary Government, wishing to keep him out of mischief, propose invasion of England.
- (ii) Napoleon, however, prefers to attack England via the East, by overrunning Egypt, and perhaps striking thence at India, where *Tippoo of Mysore* is induced to rise against us.
- (iii) England, much embarrassed by desertion of her allies and mutiny in her fleet, is taken at a disadvantage.
- 1798 (iv) Napoleon, starting from *Toulon*, eludes *Nelson's* blockade, captures *Spring Malta*, and reaches Egypt.
- 1798 (v) After lengthy search, *Nelson* discovers French fleet at *Aboukir Bay* Aug. 1 and, sailing straight in, destroys it.

Result : Napoleon is cut off from Europe, and unable to aid *Tippoo*, who is crushed and killed, *Arthur Wellesley* (*Duke of Wellington* to be) taking part in campaign.

B. Napoleon's March through Syria

- (i) Napoleon overruns Egypt, defeating military rulers, the *Mamelukes*, near *Pyramids*.
- 1799 (ii) Posing as champion of Mohammedanism, he proposes to make himself master of Turkey, and to return to Europe via *Constantinople*.
- (iii) Marching across desert and north through Palestine, Napoleon turns aside to capture *Acre*.
- (iv) Small Turco-British garrison under *Sidney Smith* holds out until Turkish fleet arrives with reinforcements.
- (v) Napoleon abandons siege and returns to Egypt.
- 1799 (vi) Leaving his army in Egypt, where it is captured by *Abercromby* a year later, Napoleon escapes in frigate to France, when he turns out *Directory* and becomes dictator with title of "*First Consul*".

Result : Napoleon resolves to restore French prestige in Europe by force of arms.

C. Napoleon and Europe

- (i) The *Second Coalition* is formed by Pitt of *Austria, Russia, England*.
 - 1800 (a) Marching against Austrians, who had recovered North Italy Napoleon overwhelms them at *Marengo*.
 - 1801 (b) Beaten also on the Rhine, Austria makes peace.
 - (c) The erratic *Tsar Paul* of Russia goes over to Napoleon.
- (ii) Attempt to combine Europe against England.
 - (a) Owing to unpopularity of British blockade, Napoleon persuades Russia, Sweden, and Denmark to form "*Armed Neutrality*" against British shipping.
 - (b) *Sir Hyde Parker* and *Nelson* promptly sent to Baltic.
 - 1801 (c) By Nelson's pertinacity Danish fleet defeated at *Copenhagen*.
 - (d) *Tsar Paul* being assassinated, his successor makes peace with England.

Result: In 1802 Napoleon makes peace by *Treaty of Amiens*, whereby we allow him to keep all country west of Rhine and recognise the North Italian and Dutch Republics formed under his direct influence.

Special subjects: Napoleon's early career and character; Battle of the Nile.

XIV. ENGLAND AND IRELAND DURING THE WAR

A. The Younger Pitt and the War

- (i) Though confident of speedy victory, Pitt showed great energy and won complete confidence of the country.
- (ii) Immense sums raised to lend our allies; Income Tax of 2s. in pound imposed; £300,000,000 added to the debt.
- (iii) Danger of revolutionary propaganda in England faced by stern suppression.
 - (a) *Aliens' Act* for arrest of suspicious foreigners.
 - (b) *Habeas Corpus* suspended to allow of detention pending inquiry.
 - (c) Law passed forbidding meetings of over 50 persons.

B. Ireland: History during Eighteenth Century

- (i) Cause of bitterness twofold:—
 - (a) Rivalry between Protestant settlers (planted by Elizabeth, James I, Cromwell, and William III, especially in Ulster), and the Catholic natives.
 - (b) English commercial policy of suppressing all Irish produce which might compete with home industries.
- (ii) Constitution:—
 - (a) *Viceroy* sent to Dublin Castle from England.
 - (b) *Irish Parliament*, which makes local laws, but is subject to veto of British Parliament.

N.B.—Catholics excluded from public life; and the Protestants use Parliament to suppress and bully their rivals.

(iii) Penal Laws:—

- (a) After battle of Boyne Catholics excluded from army commissions, learned professions, land purchase, and carrying arms.
- (b) But these affected poorer peasants very little and gradually fell into disuse.

(iv) Commercial Code:—

- (a) Ireland naturally very productive; but fear of competition caused exclusion from England of pigs, etc. (Charles II); wool (William III); cotton (George I).
- (b) Trade being thus ruined, Irish took to potato-growing and fell into apathy and despair.

C. Home Rule Granted

- 1774 (i) Example of American Colonies fired Irish patriots' ambition.
- 1779 (ii) But, when French invasion threatened, Irish patriotically volunteered to defend their coasts.
- (iii) Then volunteer movement used as instrument to extort concessions from England.
- (iv) Trade restrictions abolished (1780); Irish Parliament given more or less independent power.
- 1782 (v) Under leadership of broad-minded *Grattan*, concessions are gradually made to Catholics, allowing them to buy land, to hold offices under Government, and in 1793 to vote: but *not, as yet, to sit in Parliament*.

D. The Rebellion of 1798

- 1795 (i) Pitt, favouring the admittance of Catholics to the Irish Parliament, sends over *Lord Fitzwilliam* as Viceroy to effect the reform. But *Fitzwilliam* goes too fast; and George III refusing to sanction the concession, Pitt is forced to submit and recall him.
- (ii) Volunteers begin to form anew, calling themselves "United Irishmen," led by *Wolfe Tone*, *Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, etc., and demanding *complete independence* (cp. *Sinn Féin*.)
- 1796 (iii) The French Revolutionaries, being invited to assist rebellion, send *General Hoche*, who, however, fails to land.
- 1797 (iv) A similar expedition sent by Dutch, but defeated by *Duncan* off *Camperdown*.
- 1798 (v) State of anarchy in Ireland culminates in scattered risings, which, however, are crushed by military; main force of rebels in South-East easily defeated at *Vinegar Hill*: *Wolfe Tone* captured.

C. Home Rule withdrawn

- (i) Pitt, alarmed by this blow in the back during the French war, determines to end Home Rule.
- (ii) Irish Parliament at first refuses to agree; but, after an election, manipulated with extensive bribery, a new Parliament votes its own power away.
- 1800 (iii) By the *Act of Union* Ireland is henceforth to be ruled directly by British Parliament; as a concession, a hundred Irish members are to be admitted at Westminster, and a promise is given (though not fulfilled) that Catholics will be eligible as members.

XV. INVASION OR TRAFALGAR

A. Renewal of the War

- (i) Napoleon breaks the *Treaty of Amiens* (1802) by :—
 - (a) Refusing to evacuate *Holland*.
 - (b) Accepting Presidency of *North Italian Republic*.
 - (c) Sending agents to *Egypt*.
- (ii) England justifiably refuses to surrender *Malta*.
- 1803 (iii) After twelve months of peace war between England and France is
Spring reopened.
- 1804 (iv) Napoleon, hitherto "First Consul," is crowned "Emperor".
- 1804 (v) *Addington*, minister since Treaty of Amiens, is replaced by *Pitt*.

B. Napoleon's Scheme of Invasion

I. First Phase.

- (i) Napoleon builds ships assiduously and collects 100,000 men at *Boulogne* with flotilla of boats.
 - (ii) In England 300,000 volunteers raised; trenches dug; Martello towers built.
 - (iii) British fleet keeps close watch on Channel by patrol of light frigates.
- Result :—No opportunity is given for Army of Invasion to cross.

II. Second Phase.

- (i) The French fleets being scattered in different ports, Napoleon determines to concentrate them, but his plans all fail.
- 1805 (ii) Spain joins France, bringing her a powerful fleet.
- Jan. (iii) *Villeneuve* at *Toulon* and *Ganteaume* at *Brest* are told to effect a junction in Atlantic, and together with the Spanish fleet to gain temporary command of the Channel.
- Mar. (iv) Though *Ganteaume's* escape is foiled by *Cornwallis's* blockade, *Villeneuve* gets out from *Toulon*, picks up Spanish at *Cadiz*, and makes for *West Indies*.
- (v) *Nelson* pursues and nearly catches him in *West Indies*.
- (vi) *Villeneuve* returning is met by *Calder*, and after indecisive engagement puts into *Ferrol*.
- (vii) *Villeneuve* sails towards *Brest*; but is scared off by British squadron, and retires south to *Cadiz*.
- (viii) *Nelson*, after returning via *Gibraltar* to England, is sent with 27 ships after *Villeneuve's* 33.
- Oct. (ix) Engaging them off *Cape Trafalgar*, he breaks their line in two places and crushes centre and rear, while their van is manœuvring to return upon scene of action.
- (x) Napoleon, meanwhile, realising the failure of his scheme, has ordered his "Army of Invasion" to leave *Boulogne* and march against *Austria*.

C. Third Coalition

- 1805 (i) Meanwhile *Pitt* has got *Russia* and *Austria* to join England.
- Summer (ii) While *Nelson* is sailing to *Trafalgar*, Napoleon swoops on *Austrians*, defeats them at *Ulm* (Oct.), captures *Vienna*, and finally overwhelms them at *Austerlitz* (Dec.).

- 1806 (iii) Prussia, foolishly joining Coalition, is crushed at *Auerstadt* and Autumn *Jena*.
 1807 (iv) Tsar of Russia makes agreement with Napoleon by *Treaty of Tilsit* to divide Poland and much of Prussia between them; old Imperial States of Central Germany is formed into *Confederation of the Rhine*, under Napoleon's authority.
 (v) All Europe is now at France's mercy; Pitt dies.

Special Subjects:—British sailors and admirals: Trafalgar.

XVI. THE CONTINENTAL SYSTEM

A. Napoleon's Schemes

- 1806 (i) Having nearly all Europe under his control, Napoleon attempts by Nov. "*Berlin Decrees*" to establish a complete blockade of England.
 (ii) His success seems assured; his brothers and marshals planted as rulers over various states.
 1808 (iii) By slim tactics he gets the old *King of Spain* to abdicate in favour of his brother, *Joseph Bonaparte*.
 (iv) Spaniards rise and turn Joseph out of Madrid.

B. England's Answer

- (i) Whig "Ministry of all the Talents," which succeeds on Pitt's death, fails in its attempt to make peace, and is replaced by Tory Government (Portland, Castlereagh, Canning, etc.).
 (ii) They answer Napoleon's blockade by "Orders in Council" banning all neutrals from Napoleon's ports (thus provoking the American States to war in 1812).
 (iii) Though foolishly dissipating forces, e.g. against *Constantinople* (1807) and against *Antwerp* (*Walcheren Expedition*, 1809), the Government gradually learns to concentrate on saving Spain.

C. Peninsular War (1808-1813)

- I. First Phase: Sallies into Spain.*
 1808 (i) Wellington lands near Lisbon, defeats French at *Vimiero*, but allows their army to evacuate Portugal under terms of *Convention of Cintra*, for which he is temporarily recalled.
 (ii) Lisbon forms excellent base from which to worry French, who are already embarrassed by Spanish *guerillas* and commissariat difficulties.
 1808 (iii) Sir *John Moore*, in Wellington's absence, strikes north-east into Dec. Spain, aiming at main road of communications between Madrid and Bayonne.
 1809 (iv) Napoleon tries to cut him off, but Moore, turning back for *Corunna*, Jan. eludes pursuit and, defeating *Soult* outside town, secures escape for his army by sea.
 1809 (v) Wellington marches up *Tagus* to threaten Madrid, but, though defeating Joseph and Victor at *Talavera*, falls back into Portugal.

II. Second Phase: Wellington on the Defensive.

- 1810 (i) Sending *Soult* to over-run Southern Spain, Napoleon orders Summer *Massena* to drive British "into the sea".
- (ii) After fighting at *Busaco*, Wellington falls back on lines prepared at *Torres Vedras*, wasting country as he goes.
- (iii) *Massena*, failing to make any impression on lines, is forced by lack of supplies to fall back after six weeks.

Result: Portugal is saved, and time given to reorganise Spanish and Portuguese armies and to improve commissariat, etc.

III. Third Phase: The Invasion of Spain.

- (i) The tide turns in our favour, since Napoleon, having lost interest in Spain, withdraws best troops for use elsewhere.
- 1811 (ii) Wellington attempts to recover strategic routes into Spain.
- (a) Wellington captures *Almeida* after beating back *Massena* at *Fuentes d'Onoro*, but fails to take *Ciudad Rodrigo*.
- (b) *Beresford* attacks *Badajoz*, but, though defeating *Soult* at *Albuera*, fails to take the fort.
- 1812 (iii) Wellington recovers routes into Spain.
- (a) Attacking, while it is still winter, Wellington takes *Ciudad Rodrigo*.
- (b) Slipping south, he storms *Badajoz* before relief arrives.
- 1812 (iv) Striking into Spain, Wellington defeats French at *Salamanca*, but, though entering *Madrid* and advancing to *Burgos*, he is forced to fall back on Portugal.
- 1813 (v) With large Spanish and Portuguese contingents, Wellington drives back French through Northern Spain, and menacing their rear with force transported along northern coast, keeps them on the move.
- (vi) Defeats them finally when they turn to fight at *Vittoria*, and enters France.
- 1814 (vii) Attacks *Bayonne*; threatens *Bordeaux*; captures *Toulouse*.
- (viii) Meanwhile, Napoleon, beaten at *Leipsic*, has capitulated.

D. Napoleon's Fall

- 1809 (i) Napoleon rouses Europe by a series of blunders, e.g. seizing *Papal States* and imprisoning the Pope.
- 1809 (ii) *Austria* rises against him, but is beaten at *Wagram*.
- (iii) *Prussia*, though under his heel, trains large reserves contrary to spirit of the terms of her submission.
- 1811 (iv) *Tsar* refuses to close his ports to neutral shipping, and Napoleon resolves on invading Russia.
- 1812 (v) Invasion of Russia:
- (a) Crosses border (June).
- (b) Defeats Russian army at *Borodino*.
- (c) Enters *Moscow* (October).
- (d) Retires from *Moscow* (November).
- (e) Fights his way across *Beresina*.
- (f) Leaves grand army to its fate and returns to France.
- (vi) Europe rises, *Prussia*, *Austria*, *Sweden*, and other States joining England.
- 1813 (vii) Napoleon defeated in "Battle of the Nations" at *Leipsic*.
- 1814 (viii) Abdicates in favour of brother of Louis XVI. and retires to *Elba*.

XVII. THE HUNDRED DAYS

A. The Campaign

- 1815 (i) While the Powers are discussing reconstruction of Europe at the Spring Congress of Vienna, Napoleon returns to France from *Elba* and is enthusiastically received.
- (ii) Prompt measures taken by Allies: *Blücher* with 150,000 Prussians concentrates on *Namur*, *Wellington* with 100,000 British, Belgian, and Hanoverian troops on *Brussels*.
- June (iii) Napoleon with 120,000 men hurries north and, crossing *Sambre* at 15 *Charleroi*, determines to defeat separately, first *Blücher*, then *Wellington*.
- (iv) Napoleon sends *Ney* to check British advance on *Quatre Bras* and himself attacks Prussians at *Ligny*.
- June (v) Since, through conflicting orders from Napoleon and *Ney*, *D'Erlon's* 16 corps assists neither, *Ney* barely makes good at *Quatre Bras*, and Friday Napoleon does not rout Prussians until evening.
- June (vi) *Blücher* retires, *not* to his base at *Namur*, but to *Wavre*, so keeping 17 in touch with *Wellington*; but *Grouchy*, when sent after him next Sat., day, mistakenly pursues towards *Namur*.
- June (vii) *Wellington* falls back from *Quatre Bras* and takes up position at 17 *Waterloo*; Napoleon follows up in leisurely manner, not fearing Sat. arrival of *Blücher*.

B. Waterloo. Sunday, 18th June

- (i) Waiting for ground to dry after rain, Napoleon does not attack till noon.
- 12 (ii) Feint against *Hougomont* to draw reinforcements from centre of noon Wellington's line fails of its purpose. (I. in Plan.)
- (iii) After bombardment, main attack upon *Wellington's* left is repulsed and pursued back by cavalry. (II. in Plan.)
- 3 p.m. (iv) Prussians appear far away on Napoleon's right.
- 4 p.m. (v) By some error whole French cavalry launched on *Wellington's* centre (III in Plan), but British squares stand firm.
- 6 p.m. (vi) *La Haye Sainte* is taken and Napoleon orders final assault of *Old Guard* (IV in Plan), which is repulsed (*Colborne's* manœuvre).
- (vii) British line follows *Guard* downhill, and simultaneously Prussians burst in upon Napoleon's right rear.
- (viii) French army runs for dear life to *Sambre* crossings.

C. The Congress of Vienna

- (i) Paris entered; Napoleon sent to *St. Helena*.
- (ii) France put under Bourbon King and reduced to frontiers of Pre-Revolution days.
- (iii) Map revised:—uniting Holland and Belgium, returning Lombardy and Venice to Austria, giving Russia a large share of Poland, Prussia part of Saxony, and England Malta and the Cape.
- (iv) The Powers agree in "Holy Alliance" to combat the pernicious democratic spirit of revolutionary France and to uphold the principles of Law and Order.

XVIII. ENGLAND DURING THE WAR

A. Industrial Prosperity

- (i) Enormous trade boom, as a result of our Continental rivals' exhaustion and exclusion from the sea.
- (ii) Machinery multiplies production to meet the new demands.
- (iii) Cotton industry doubled between 1800-1815.
- (iv) Exports at end of war four times the value of exports before the war.
- (v) Shortage of corn leads to breaking up of new land, and farmers thrive, with wheat at two or three times its normal price.

B. Condition of Industrial Workers

- (i) The workers receive inadequate wages and are heavily burdened through taxes upon food, etc.
- (ii) Bread riots and other disturbances ruthlessly suppressed; barracks built for troops near larger towns.
- (iii) New manufacturers prove hard task-masters and employ women and children at starvation wages for excessive hours.
- 1/99 (iv) Attempt of workers to combine in Unions for the improvement of their lot is defeated by the "*Combination Act*," forbidding all "combination in restraint of trade."

Result: The employee is entirely at the mercy of his employer who is frequently a magistrate and so can compel him *either to work or to go to prison*.

C. Condition of Agricultural Labourer

- (i) Process of *Enclosure* of "Common Land" had gone on through eighteenth century, since go-ahead landowners saw that large farms were more profitable and economical.
- (ii) This tendency quickened by shortage of corn during the war.
- (iii) The peasants, who had possessed rights of grazing, turf cutting, etc., on Common Land, find themselves ruined by Enclosure, since they can no longer keep a cow, etc., and often cannot afford to fence the plot allotted to them.
- (iv) Pitiable condition of agricultural labourers alarms authorities, who fear spread of revolutionary propaganda from France, so, as a remedy, they supplement the inadequate wages by doles from the *Poor Rates*.

Result: The poor labourer, though receiving just enough to keep himself alive, sinks to the status of a *pauper*, while the farmers thrive on high corn prices and landlords grow rich on huge rents from the farmers.

D. The Spirit of Protest

- (i) Whig and "Radical" reformers begin to draw attention to the oppression of the poor.
- (ii) Young poets like Shelley and Byron denounce the existing state of things and advocate revolutionary principles.

- (iii) In Literature the new school of the "*Romantic Movement*," Wordsworth (1770-1850), Scott (1771-1832), Coleridge (1772-1834), Shelley (1792-1822), Keats (1795-1821), rebel against the artificial style of the Pope-Johnson tradition, attempting to study nature as she is and to express their ideas more naturally.
- (iv) The *Novel* paves the way for the study of the life of the poor (as was done, e.g., by Dickens).
 - (a) The fashion set between 1740 and 1760 by *Richardson* ("Pamela," 1740), *Smollett* ("Roderick Random," 1748) and *Fielding* ("Tom Jones," 1749).
 - (b) Carried on by *Sterne* ("Tristram Shandy," 1760) and *Goldsmith* ("Vicar of Wakefield," 1764).
 - (c) Perfected by *Sir Walter Scott* (1771-1832) and *Jane Austen* (1775-1817).

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1815-1921

BY
CYRIL E. ROBINSON
ASSISTANT MASTER AT WINCHESTER COLLEGE

WITH FIFTEEN MAPS AND PLANS



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PREFACE

TO sift the crowded narrative of the century now past and to select the vital matter from the rest is still, and must for many years remain, at the individual's choice. Much that is here omitted will strike critics as worth mention ; some incidents may seem unduly stressed. For the considerable space devoted to the events of the Great War, I make no apology ; on the rising generation their claim is paramount. More questionable, I feel, are the somewhat large digressions into European politics and wars ; yet without these it would be difficult to keep in view the general trend of the century's development. The conflict of two opposed political ideals is the key, if key there be, to a comprehension of the bewildering period ; and, if we are at all to realize what England has achieved in it, our perspective must be broad.

The task of recording what is still so new and as yet so ill-defined must be hedged about by many pitfalls ; and I am therefore the more fortunate to have received the help not only of Mr. A. T. P. Williams, who revised my manuscript, but also of Dr. W. H. Davies and Mr. C. Sankey, who have revised the proofs. I am much beholden to these and other friendly critics, through whose aid I trust that, if not all, at least many of the pitfalls may have been avoided here.

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A HISTORY OF ENGLAND

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND AFTER

CHAPTER I

EUROPE AFTER WATERLOO

I

MANY causes contribute to make the study of the nineteenth century a peculiarly difficult and bewildering task. In the first place, by reason of their very nearness to ourselves, it is hard to place events and personalities in their genuine perspective; and the mass of evidence becomes so overwhelming that, as the proverb goes, we can scarce see the wood for the trees. Then, again, the period itself is one of extraordinary complexity. New problems open out in all directions, and there seems no common principle whereby to knit them up. Thus, there are many wars occurring in the century; but no central antagonism appears here at the root of all, as, in the previous century, each fresh campaign was but another chapter in the age-long conflict between ourselves and France. Politics, too, strike out into unfamiliar branches; and the student of Parliamentary doings is distracted by a multitude of fresh issues—imperial and municipal, social and industrial, moral and economic (half the very terms themselves are new). Party rivalry becomes more active. New party cries are raised; new party labels begin to be

adopted. Trades Unions, too, are formed; and Labour—a new antagonist—enters the field. Meanwhile, to complicate the matter further, Englishmen are busy in every quarter of the globe, administering, developing, and extending our Colonial Empire; so that English history is scarcely now to be dis severed from the history of the world, and there is little that happens in any time or place but directly or indirectly it affects our politics. More especially, perhaps, does this hold true of Europe. There had been days when continental peoples might do much as they pleased without our feeling the result; but now the international situation has become so delicate, and every State is grown so dependent upon others, that we must needs watch developments in Germany and France almost as closely as if they had been our own. In short, modern life has become at the same time more full in detail and more wide in scope. Our days are busier than those of our great-great-grandfathers. Our interests are more numerous and our commitments larger. Our life is to theirs as is a copy of "The Times"—with its ample information of five continents, its multitudinous items of trivial incident, its separate columns upon art and music, law and religion, athletics and finance—as compared with the simple news-sheet of the Georgian epoch, easily to be read and exhaustively digested with the somewhat ample breakfast then in fashion. But if the record of a single modern day is thus voluminous, it stands to reason that a hundred years of this hurly-burly many-sided life cannot easily be compressed into a score of chapters. It is our business, therefore, to concentrate upon the more important problems and to let the rest go to the winds. We must select with care, but reject without remorse. Above all, we must endeavour to hold fast to the main thread of the century's development, and to grasp in a broad sense whither the world has on the whole been travelling during these eventful and momentous years.

This much at least is perhaps worth saying in advance. In its broad outline our period falls into two well-defined and roughly equal parts. Up to the middle of the century

we shall witness a continuous, though uphill, struggle of popular agitation against monarchical oppression, ending in a more than partial triumph for democracy. France in her Revolution had pointed the way; and one by one the other nations essayed, though with more faltering step, to follow in her tracks. England, by the great Reform Bill of 1832, extended a share in the country's government to a somewhat wider circle of her folk. In Spain the Crown was driven by a series of national uprisings to submit to a constitutional régime. In 1830 a sturdy band of brave Greek patriots threw off the Turkish yoke. Soon after the Belgian people won their liberty. In 1848 Italy made an effort which, though failing for the moment, laid at least the foundations of ultimate success. In the same year, too, the German populace made a half-hearted bid for freedom. Their revolution failed; and by that failure was determined the history of the century's second half. For, while in 1850 the rest of Europe was pledged in varying degrees to the ideals of democracy, Germany and Austria stood apart, monarchies unconverted and impenitent.

In the second part of our period, therefore, the course of development follows two widely divergent lines. Britain moves forward—faltering still, stumbling, and feeling her way—along the path towards larger freedom. She extends the franchise to a still wider circle of the common folk by a second great measure of reform. She begins, however grudgingly, to allow Labour the right to speak and act; and, though tempted to other courses by the subtle lure of Empire, she makes the great discovery that not colonies alone, but even conquered peoples, can be most effectually governed by allowing them the privilege of governing themselves. In her heart of hearts, though she will not admit it, she even begins to feel a dim suspicion that the same may actually be true of Ireland. Meanwhile, upon the Continent things have taken a very different course. Under Bismarck's able guidance the militarist monarchy of Prussia pushes to the fore, first bringing Austria to heel, then humbling France, and exercising at the same time such

authoritative pressure on her neighbouring sister States that Bismarck's master from being Prussian King becomes at last Emperor of all Germany. Thus, while in other countries Liberty is gaining in her stride (for Italy has by now thrown off the yoke of Austria, and even the Russian Tsar has made large concessions to his peasant subjects), Central Europe still stands for the monarchical ideals of the Bourbon or the Stuart.

Thus were the lists made ready for a final and decisive test between the old gods and the new. The Great War was the inevitable sequel of that fatal parting of the ways; and before the world could be "made safe for Democracy and Freedom," the issue between the rival champions was bound to be squarely joined. The true key to the history of the nineteenth century is to be found in what has happened in the twentieth.

II

The victory of Waterloo has long served as the accredited landmark of historians; but in point of fact it was during 1814 rather than 1815 that the old chapter of European politics was definitely closed and the new chapter begun. For in the autumn of that year the Congress met which was to shape the immediate future, at any rate, of the Continent's affairs. Napoleon had been compelled in spring to abdicate his throne, and had retired an exile to Elba; and in September the representatives of the powers had assembled at Vienna, where through the months of winter and spring they laboured to set an exhausted world again upon its feet. Napoleon's unexpected reappearance and the forlorn adventure of his "Hundred Days" caused, it is true, some interruption of their labours; but it was brief, and, just a week before the battle of Waterloo was fought, the Congress issued its final mandate to the world. Great things were to have come out of that settlement, and hopes not unnaturally ran high. For twenty years Europe had been racked by an almost continuous series of destructive

wars; and, when the chief author of their troubles had been at last removed, the peoples breathed again. They believed that now at last the lessons of a suicidal conflict had been taken well to heart, that swords would immediately be converted into ploughshares and spears beaten into pruning-hooks. Europe's peace henceforward seemed assured. The Millennium was at hand.

Had peace been all that European peoples needed, the Vienna settlement might be called a great success; for nearly forty years were to elapse before war again broke out between the leading powers. Yet peace was not the only nor perhaps the chief demand of the expectant peoples. A new spirit—call it democracy or what you will—was now abroad in Europe; and the desire for a freer life was planted deep. The French Revolution had begun it. Men had watched with bewildered eyes this first audacious experiment in true democracy; and they had come to realise almost despite themselves that something else than the old familiar form of aristocratic government was not merely possible, but worked. Then came Napoleon; and, as the representative of his country's new ideal, he had carried something of its spirit into the surrounding lands which he conquered. In Germany he had found the peasant a down-trodden serf; he had left him a free owner of the soil. There and elsewhere he had replaced by well-ordered government and justice the old slipshod, selfish methods of aristocracies and kings; and the great legal code, which was called after his name, had become the charter of all Central Europe. It was therefore not unnatural that the citizens of these countries dreaded a return to the tyranny and inefficiency of bygone days. Their eyes had been opened to the gross shortcomings of their own half-feudal governments. They had tasted the advantages of organized control; and they refused to forget. Nor was this all: Napoleon's schemes of conquest had produced another and even more permanent result. However efficient, his rule had never been popular for the simple reason that it was an alien rule; and the occupation of their fatherland by

Frenchmen had made these folk realize, almost for the first time perhaps, that a fatherland was something for which they really cared. In Spain we have seen with what surprising resolution the common folk had rallied to resist the invasion of their soil; and, even in countries which had failed at first of such successful opposition, the effect was eventually the same. Napoleon's presence awoke in them a spirit of patriotism and a sense of national existence such as they had never felt before; and, now that they had recovered their independence, they were the more unwilling to surrender up their lives into the keeping of their own irresponsible governments and kings. For better or for worse the war-cry of liberty had been raised; and its echoes were never wholly to die down again until the long battle had been fought and won.

To the monarchs, princes, and diplomatists assembled at the Austrian capital in 1814 all this, however, appeared in a different and much less rosy light. To them democracy was a will-o'-the-wisp, an illusion, and a dangerous illusion at that. With the exception of Switzerland, there was not then, let us remember, one single State in Europe but was governed either by an absolute monarch or by a narrow noble caste; and to the governors at least such governments appeared the only natural and appropriate method of maintaining orderly control. Picture, therefore, with what horror and disgust these men had beheld a King of France dethroned, imprisoned, and beheaded, with what dismay they witnessed the rise of a French democracy upon the foundations of that hideous crime, and with what perturbation they became presently aware that the Revolution had struck a sympathetic chord in the hearts of their own subject populations. What Bolshevism in our own day has been to the governing classes all the world over, that the Revolution was to the crowned heads of Europe a hundred years ago. They were genuinely scared; they felt the foundations of society to be quaking beneath their feet; and, if they acted blindly, they acted not unnaturally. For they verily believed that the maintenance of their own authority, and

that alone, could save the world from irretrievable disaster. When, therefore, they assembled to discuss the situation and to devise, if possible, a remedy for the impending danger, their one fixed idea was to re-establish, so far as it lay within their power to do so, the precise condition of affairs that had existed previous to the war. "Let nothing be changed," they pronounced with an almost incredible audacity. As well might they have demanded, like Canute, that the waters of the ocean should obey them; for the march of progress can no more be stayed than the incoming of the tide.

Such, then, was the temper of the august assembly which met to discuss the resettlement of Europe in the ancient city of the Hapsburg Emperors. Wholly in keeping with that temper was the atmosphere of the Court, which, more perhaps than any other in the world, might be held to represent the old mediæval tradition of absolute, unfettered monarchy. Life at Vienna was redolent of the callous selfishness and irresponsible extravagance which were the crying scandal of the old régime. During that winter many peasants of the Austrian country-side were dying of starvation; yet £10,000 was expended daily in the capital on the entertainment of the illustrious guests. Balls and levees, masquerades and concerts were provided in plenty for the gay society which had followed in the representatives' train; and there was more of dancing and flirtation during the months of that fateful session than of honest work or sober thought. So Nero fiddled, while Rome burned; and so on the eve of the Revolution the lords and ladies of King Louis' Court had made merry at their ease. But behind the brilliant externals of ceremonial pomp and frivolous amusement there lay something also a good deal worse than mere ignorance and folly. In the background there were a multitude of clever wits at work; ambitious schemes were being pushed with energy and cunning; spies and secret agents kept close watch over chance words or significant encounters; and intrigues, hatched under cover of a tea-party or luncheon, were sedulously developed within the council chamber walls. In all this the Congress was no

better and no worse than others of its sort. The diplomacy of the day was at best a discreditable business. It expected no standard of honesty, and pretended to none. Its avowed and patent object was by whatever means to outwit and get the better of a rival. Now in this unpleasant game of political intrigue there was no master to compare with the Austrian Emperor's own representative and minister, Prince Metternich. A courtly, handsome figure, blazing with the stars and decorations of a dozen different countries and bearing his great responsibilities with an inimitable grace, the Prince moved in that heterogeneous gathering as in his natural element; and there he found for his peculiar talents an unrivalled scope. He could engage an enemy in a chat about the weather and pick a secret from his casual looks. His polished charm of manner and address enabled him to win the confidence of men who had every cause to fear him and distrust him; for he could joke or argue, flatter or cajole without once betraying on his suave demeanour a hint of what secret machinations lay beneath. Even Napoleon, with all his genius for hypocrisy and bluff, had found in this young Austrian nobleman a foe worthy of his steel. But, more than this, Prince Metternich, as Austria's representative, was naturally appointed to preside over the Congress; and in him, as it so happened, the doctrine of resistance to democracy and freedom found its most complete and virulent expression. Honestly believing the revolutionary spirit to be the invention of the Evil One, he felt that for Europe the one hope of safety lay in stifling the menace at its birth. This "by the aid of God" he was determined to effect, and to vanquish his new enemy the People, just as he boasted to have vanquished already the conqueror of the world. At the Vienna Congress (as after it for thirty years and over) this was the guiding star of Metternich's perverse, infinitely capable, but in the long run ruinous diplomacy.

There was, however, among the other parties at that Congress one who could speak with as much authority as Metternich himself, but whose views were at the same time

almost diametrically opposed to his—Alexander, the Russian Tsar. Like many of his countrymen, Alexander's temperament was of an ill-balanced, impressionable type. Always deeply religious—but with a zeal which often bordered on fanaticism—he had fallen of late under the unhealthy influence of a certain female prophet or divine. He too fancied that he had a "heavenly mission" to accomplish in the world; but his gospel was far from being the gospel of the Austrian Prince. As a young man he had been converted by a study of the treatises of Rousseau to a belief in the rights and liberties of man; and, despite the autocratic traditions of his office, he had even put a part of his ideals into practice by beginning the emancipation of the Russian serfs. So, though Metternich called him a madman for his pains, and though the rest of his fellow-princes regarded his suggestions with half-tolerant amusement or a sneer, Alexander attempted at Vienna to uphold the principles of progress and reform: the people, so he argued, must be given their head; some sort of representative assembly was a necessary condition of civilized life; and, wherever such an institution had been put in force or promised, it was equally against all commonsense or justice to cancel or withhold the boon. Men might laugh, but they were bound to listen. The Tsar of Russia was perhaps the most important personage in Europe; his country was least of any exhausted by the war; he could count on an army of unnumbered thousands; and, however odd they might appear to others, his views were not a factor to be lightly ignored. Midway in opinion between Metternich on the one hand and Alexander on the other stood the British representative and Foreign Secretary, Lord Castlereagh. Castlereagh was no dreamer. With the Tsar's enthusiasms he did not pretend to sympathize; indeed, he could hardly understand them. But he was ten times more honest a fellow than the Austrian. A solid, silent, typical Englishman of the old school, he knew what he wanted and he usually got it, but without unnecessary fuss or showy argument; for he had no gift of the gab. By temperament and training a Conservative, he

too felt for the Revolution a loathing which he made no effort to conceal. But it was not easy for the representative of England, with her long and famous history of constitutional development, to think quite as others did. Castle-reagh, therefore, was unable to follow his continental colleagues into their more wild and fanatical attacks upon the liberties of peoples. Though willing to restrain, he was not prepared to tyrannize; and—with an inclination characteristically British to give foreigners the benefit of the doubt—he could scarcely bring himself to believe that others meant to do so.

III

With such wide divergences of standpoint and opinion existing between the chief members of the Congress, there was clearly every prospect of lively disagreement. Clash of material interests and political prejudice gave rise to bitter words and stormy scenes; and at one point it appeared as good as certain that the different parties of the Grand Alliance would be plunged into mutual war. Nevertheless, the crisis passed; the conference proceeded; the representative of the five leading powers worked hard; and at length, amid general satisfaction, the looked-for settlement was made. The work of the Congress may be grouped under three heads: first, the measures taken to stem the progress of revolutionary ideas; second, the redistribution of the territorial map; and, finally, the reassertion of the essential unity of Europe, and a brave, though ineffective, endeavour to establish what we should call to-day a League of Nations.

First, then, and most dear to the heart of the assembled statesmen, a principle was established whereby the authority of kings over their peoples might be set beyond a doubt. Under Napoleon's regime, we must remember, many crowned heads had temporarily disappeared, and their places been taken by the Emperor's relatives or nominees. The problem of restoring the dispossessed to their inheritance was

formulated by the representative of France, Talleyrand Périgord, ex-bishop of Autun. Talleyrand had trimmed his sails adroitly during the storms of the Revolution, had served under Napoleon, and yet by ingenious manœuvring retained a high position after his master's fall. Champion now of the repatriated Bourbon, Louis XVIII, Talleyrand had a supreme interest in rendering the position of his new protégé secure. He therefore put forward the doctrine that, even though kingship were not actually conferred by an act of Divine Grace, yet its tenure ought at least to be confirmed by the legal recognition of mankind. Thrones, in fact, provided they were hereditary, well established, or (in the phrase he used) "legitimate," were to be regarded as the inalienable property of their possessors, and the unanimous support of the European powers should go to back the claim of all such legitimate monarchs. The Congress fell in readily with Talleyrand's idea; and by general agreement the exiled rulers, not of France alone, but of Spain, Naples, and the larger German principalities, were duly reinstalled. But, though the privilege of monarchs was thus satisfactorily upheld, and the work of the revolutionary period undermined, it still remained to determine on what precise conditions the restored monarchs were to rule. Were they to be given a fresh lease of their old unlimited power; or was the people's claim to be considered and some say allowed them in the management of their national affairs? In France it was felt with good reason that there would be the greatest difficulty in putting back the clock to pre-revolutionary days; and the French at least were therefore to retain the privilege of a representative assembly, for whatever that privilege were worth. In Spain, however, where during the war against Napoleon a full-fledged democratic constitution had equally been formed, the case was very different. There things had not gone as yet too far; and, when the restored monarch proceeded soon after his return to abolish the obnoxious constitution root and branch, none were better pleased than his friends of the Vienna Congress. The problem of the

German States was more difficult. The German people were notoriously unready to bow the neck, as of old, to their narrow-minded feudal princelings ; and some trouble might be expected in bringing them to heel. It seemed as though some sort of constitution would have to be allowed them. Alexander talked grandly about re-establishing the Germans "upon the ancient spirit of their people." Even Metternich felt doubts. A skilful compromise settled the point. The Congress suggested that the formation of some representative assembly was desirable in all the German States, but provided no machinery whatever to ensure that this was done. Thus, if the German Princes were successful in holding their own against popular pressure, no one would be sorry ; if, on the other hand, they failed and the people went too far, recourse could always be had to exterior assistance. Metternich and his friends, however unwise the policy, were prepared to interfere, and if necessary (as we shall see) to interfere with force. In short, the purpose which these gentlemen pursued, was at all points very signally achieved. The people were shackled once more with the chains which had so recently been lifted. Their reinslavement was sealed with the approval and authority of the Great Powers, their neighbours ; and woe betide them if they dared in the future to renew the attempt to escape ! To the potentates at Vienna it appeared indeed as though the past had been effectually erased, and the mischief done by Napoleon consigned to the limbo of forgotten things. Even the famous military road which his engineers had constructed over the Mt. Cenis' pass was actually closed against all travellers. But if by such measures these gentlemen really imagined that the spectres of revolution and democracy could permanently be laid, they were soon to discover their mistake. The crazy Tsar had after all been right.

In the second part of their labours—the redistribution of the map—the allied Powers showed themselves as completely indifferent to popular sentiments and national aspirations as they had done in the first. They chopped

far as any common purpose was pursued in the process of readjustment, it was based wholly and solely on the old political notion of preserving the Balance of Power. The first and essential step was of course to deal faithfully with France, and to provide substantial safeguards against the renewal of her aggression. A heavy indemnity indeed was levied on her pocket, and an army left to occupy the country until proof of its payment were forthcoming. But this was not felt to be enough; and, despite Alexander's anxiety to spare her, there were those who deemed such punishment inadequate, and who wished to cripple her strength for good and all by cutting her in pieces. A more generous view prevailed; and the Powers were content with taking some precautionary measures with regard to her military frontiers. Belgium, which Napoleon had to all intents and purposes annexed, was compelled much against her will to unite with Holland, and thus to form a powerful bulwark against France upon the north. A similar bulwark was provided in the south by the merging of Genoa with Piedmont. The really crucial question, however, was whether France should be allowed to maintain her frontier on the Rhine. After much hesitation, Alsace and Lorraine, occupied by Louis XIV, were left in her keeping; but farther north she was put back to her old-established boundary; and with that security the Powers felt satisfied that she would be in no position to trouble Europe's peace a second time. It remained to dispose of the more delicate problem of Central Europe itself. The Holy Roman Empire, that old historic bond which for so many centuries had in some sort held the German principalities together, had lost its last vestige of reality during the Napoleonic wars, and to revive it was beyond the wildest dreams. It was decided, however, to link up the German people—thirty-nine States in all, including both Prussia and Austria¹—in a loose Confederacy or League, over which the Austrian Emperor himself was

¹ Napoleon's regrouping of the German States had reduced their number from 360 to this much more reasonable figure, to which in the interests of unity and convenience the Congress of Vienna now adhered.

appointed to preside. But, though the Hapsburgs might retain in form and name the supreme direction over German politics, yet the old, formidable menace of Prussian rivalry was becoming every year more manifest. The aggressive, grasping spirit, which took its origin from that great king and scoundrel Frederic, was still strong in the Prussian statesmen of the day; and in the territorial deal which accompanied this settlement they got by far the best of the bargain. Not merely did Prussia come into possession of half Saxony (the price which that kingdom paid for having sided with Napoleon); but she also received a handsome slice of country upon either side the Rhine and recovered Western Poland, which, despite his vigorous championship of that unhappy State's integrity, the Tsar was at length driven to concede. To Austria, on the other hand, no such considerable additions were allowed, and she was put off with Lombardy and Venice. It only remained for Bismarck, just half a century later, to complete the process which was now begun, and to show the world that Prussia could achieve a hegemony of mid-Europe which Austria, for all her traditional advantages, was now powerless to recapture.

Such, then, was the territorial settlement accomplished at Vienna. By their cynical disregard of true national boundaries in Poland, in Italy, in Belgium, and elsewhere, the authors laid up for themselves and their descendants a heritage of interminable discontent, disturbances, and wars; nor had the national aspirations which they flouted received full recognition until but yesterday, at the Conference of Versailles, our twentieth century statesmen attempted to redraw the map of Europe upon more liberal and equitable lines. In 1815, however, it was thought to have been well done. Old jealousies and recent quarrels were for the time forgotten; and the Congress at length broke up amid general congratulation and good will. The truth is that, in a world so sick of war, even the diplomatists were genuinely conscious of the necessity for international agreement. Such agreement appeared to have been established at Vienna. Differences had been settled upon the principle of mutual give

and take. A "Concert" of Europe had, in fact, been temporarily achieved. Four Powers in particular, Prussia, Austria, Russia, and Great Britain, had formed among themselves a Quadruple Alliance as a guarantee of peace; and the nations' ability to hold together was further proved by a series of fresh conferences held in the next few years at which new problems were thoroughly discussed and for the most part satisfactorily arranged. It was not, therefore, for any lack of effort that the "Concert" was eventually to fail, but rather because the principles on which it was founded had been wrong. The co-operation of its members could not, in short, be lasting because it was the co-operation of tyrants and of thieves. They had filched territory here and redrawn boundaries there, not according to the ideals of equity and freedom, but with a view to establishing what seemed to them an appropriate equilibrium between the Powers. They had pledged themselves to the mutual support of one another, not for the furtherance of progress and good government, but in order to secure by such co-operation their individual titles to grind each his subjects down. To suppose that such a conspiracy of reaction and repression could stand the test of time appears to modern eyes ridiculous. But the statesmen of that day thought otherwise; they believed that upon the basis of their settlement Europe could hold together in the bond of unity and peace. They were, therefore, less astonished than amused when shortly after the close of the Congress the fanatical Tsar proposed to knit the bond yet firmer by a direct appeal to the principles of Christ. In a solemn invitation he adjured the kings and princes to unite there and then in a "Holy Alliance," and to acknowledge that in all their future policies and acts they would be guided solely by the teaching of the Gospels and the ideals of Christian brotherhood and love. To ourselves, knowing the subsequent behaviour of these potentates, the appeal sounds almost blasphemous. Even to the men of that day it seemed somewhat out of taste; it was like exhorting the members of the Stock Exchange to a literal observance of the Sermon on the

Mount. Out of deference to its author, however, the various sovereigns signed. Metternich called it "mere verbiage," but said his master's signature could do no possible harm. England alone held back. Castlereagh broadly hinted that the Tsar's mind was unhinged; but there were stronger reasons than Castlereagh's suspicions for our deliberate abstention. Like the Americans in 1919, we were by no means anxious to prolong our entanglement in European politics beyond the period of the war. Isolation had always been our strength; and, whether the Holy Alliance were to be taken seriously or no, British common sense preferred to be on the safe side and hold aloof. The Prince Regent wrote a cordial letter expressing the warmest sympathy with the noble religious aspirations of the Tsar; but no signature was ever given to that pious document. The Alliance itself was of no very great importance in the years which followed; but England's abstention was. It was a hint—a faint hint perhaps, but for all that significant enough—that already the European Concert was in danger. There was a rift within the lute.

IV

The history of nineteenth century Europe is the tale of a long-drawn struggle between two sets of men—those who were too obstinately behind their time and those who were too impatiently ahead of it. What the one had done or attempted to do at Vienna we have seen; it was now the turn of the second group to act, and to answer the repressive measures of their masters by an appeal, first of all, to justice, and, if that failed, to force. But though, as the course of events was soon to prove, the flame of liberty might still burn strong, it would be an error to suppose that the great mass of European peoples were actively conscious whither they were moving. Peasants in the main, they were too unlettered and too "hodden down" to know well what freedom meant; and the real tragedy of these efforts towards democracy was that in the majority of cases they

were hopelessly premature. The people were not ripe for governing themselves ; and the success of the popular cause, however promising at first, was inevitably doomed to a subsequent set-back. For the men who led and inspired these agitations were mostly hot enthusiasts equally lacking in experience or restraint ; they were of the type who in England would have turned, like Byron and Shelley, to writing revolutionary poems or atheistic tracts. Abroad, however, they found a more natural outlet for their giddy rhetoric in secret societies or among hooligan mobs ; and the extremes to which they pushed their hot-headed theories often did the cause of liberty more harm than good.

Now nowhere perhaps were such men so influential or so numerous as among the students of the German University towns ; and in Germany it was that revolution (or what the nervous authorities put down as such) first dared to raise its head. The earliest hint of trouble, though it caused profound alarm, was insignificant enough. A meeting of students was held at the Wartburg to celebrate the anniversary of Luther's Reformation. After an excitable carouse at which rash things were said about the postponement of the promised "constitutions," the party danced round a bonfire and, as night wore on, threw into it some anti-democratic books of which they disapproved. Finally, to symbolise their dislike of military despotism, they burnt a soldier's straight-jacket and a corporal's cane. Amazing as it sounds, Metternich himself was seriously perturbed. He knew through spies that disaffection was rife in many German towns ; and a year or so later an event occurred to confirm his suspicions. A certain anti-liberal writer, Kotzebue by name, who was popularly supposed to have poisoned the Tsar's mind against reform, was brutally murdered in his private house by a revolutionary fanatic. Then Metternich took action. A Conference was summoned to Carlsbad from the thirty-nine confederate German States ; and decrees were passed for the repression of the students' agitations. A ban was laid upon the publication of all questionable books or pamphlets. The Universities

were strangled by a discipline so stern that no honest man could dare to speak his mind. Thousands upon thousands of suspected persons were condemned to exile or imprisonment. Thus for a full generation the spirit of liberty was savagely stamped out; and for Germany at least the Austrian minister could answer that the pernicious rot was stayed.

But events elsewhere did not wait upon Metternich's bidding; and no sooner were the flames damped down beyond the Rhine than they flared up even more dangerously in Spain. There, as we have seen, the restored King Ferdinand was no sooner back upon the throne than he made a clean sweep of the democratic constitution which during his absence had controlled the land. All the old bad methods of royal misrule now reappeared; the Inquisition was restored; the prisons overflowed; and the leaders of the recent innovations were the object of a pitiless revenge. The patient country folk accepted the change tamely; but the soldiers who had fought for their fatherland did not. They rose, sacked the great prison of the Inquisition, invaded the royal palace, and forced the unwilling King to restore the constitution he had so recently abolished and to summon the people's representatives once more. Nor was this all; for in another quarter the outbreak was to find a sympathetic echo. Italy, like Spain, was seething with discontent. A secret organisation, known as the "Carbonari" or Charcoal-burners' Club, was working underground; and on news of the triumph of the Spanish insurrection Naples was speedily the scene of a similar attempt. A constitution was drawn up after the Spanish model; and the reinstated Bourbon King—also Ferdinand by name—was compelled to pledge his honour to observe it. With the oath upon his lips, he called God to strike him dead, should he fail to carry out what he had promised; then with incredible duplicity he wrote off a secret letter asking the Austrian Emperor to help him out of the fix. In the face of such deplorable occurrences it was not for Metternich to make demur. Fears troubled

him for the Austrian provinces of Lombardy and Venice ; so he called on the southern rebels to undo their work ; and, when they indignantly refused, an Austrian army was marched down to Naples and the revolution crushed. It remained to deal with Spain. There things were all to pieces. Civil war was raging ; the courts of Europe hummed with anxious talk about the need for outside intervention ; and for this, extraordinary as it may seem, none was now more eager than the Tsar himself. The fact was that Alexander's queer, impressionable mind had recently undergone a fresh conversion. Fears of assassination, rumours of Russian revolutionary plots, and the subtle skill with which Metternich made play of these alarms had completely turned him round. He was now as anxious to suppress democracy as he had once been zealous to encourage it ; and, when news came that the Spanish monarch was battling for his throne, Alexander determined to assist him. He offered a strong Russian army for service at Madrid and proposed to march it over through Germany and France. Against such a scheme, however, the French King set his face. He, too, was as eager as anyone to crush the Spanish rising ; but he was jealous of the Tsar, resented Russian interference in western politics, and preferred, if Spain was to be taught a lesson, to do the dirty work himself. Proposals, objections, and counter-proposals followed thick and fast ; and at one time it seemed as though a combined army of all European powers might cross the Pyrenees. England, however, had the strongest dislike of such a measure. She had spent millions of money and lost thousands of men to save the Spanish people from Napoleon ; and she had no wish to see them brow-beaten now by this selfish ring of continental bullies. It was therefore singularly appropriate that, when another Congress was summoned at Verona, the representative dispatched in England's name was the old victorious champion of Spanish liberty—the Duke of Wellington himself. But even the Duke's prestige was unavailing. He appealed to the other Powers to hold their hand ; but his appeal fell

on deaf ears. It was decided that an ultimatum should be sent to the Spanish revolutionaries. The ultimatum was of course rejected. A French army was marched upon Madrid. The popular party was easily put down, and many thousands of its followers were hanged. But ere this a thing had happened which showed that, though sorely shaken, the cause of liberty was not yet dead—the Duke had left Verona. As soon as he realized his plea to have been in vain, he withdrew from the Conference and set his face for home.¹ The “Concert” of Europe was a “Concert” no more; for, rather than see a great people downtrodden and dragooned, England had broken it. For her the choice was now clear. She had come out—after a period of watchful hesitation and demur—upon the side of Nationality and Freedom.

¹ Wellington was acting on instructions contained in a memorandum drawn up by Castlereagh; but, as will be seen later, Canning and not Castlereagh was now his political chief.

CHAPTER II

ENGLAND AFTER WATERLOO

I

IF England had hesitated to declare her opposition to the policy of the continental despots, she was not without good reason for such hesitation ; for her own conscience was anything but clear, and here at home she had been witnessing an exercise of power less tyrannical no doubt than theirs, but at the same time much less justifiable. In England, however, it was not the crown which tyrannized. The royal authority, mortally shaken at the beginning of the eighteenth century, had declined still further before the century's close. George III, after a brave but fruitless effort to restore its old pre-eminence, had fallen on evil days ; he was now a hopeless lunatic, unable for the most part even to recognize his friends. His son, destined in 1820 to succeed as George IV, was acting as Prince Regent. A disreputable dissolute fellow, whose behaviour was the scandal of the court, he was nothing more than an ornament to the constitution and an ugly ornament at that. In fact, the real power lay, as we have seen long since, with the aristocracy. Peers of the realm and other titled gentlemen, society favourites and country squires—these were the true governors of England. They ruled through what was in theory a representative assembly ; but owing to the corrupt methods and obsolete machinery of Parliamentary election that assembly represented no one but their own exclusive class. And of that class, since the Whigs had blundered badly in the Napoleonic wars, the section now

uppermost was the high old Tory gang. Conservatives we should call them ; and like Metternich's their remedy for every trouble was the comfortable doctrine, " Let nothing be changed." The lamentable condition of the world at large served only to stiffen them in this opinion ; and they felt that after all that had occurred across the Channel the only safe policy was to continue upon their part to rule the British people with a rod of iron. Though possessed of a high sense of honesty and honour, polished in manner and exquisite in taste, they lacked the imaginative insight of a class which mixes freely with its fellows. They were born and bred from their youth up in a narrow, self-centred and select society. Taught to be gentlemen and to compose Latin Verse at one of the great public schools, they would go on for the most part to Oxford or Cambridge and there learn to talk politics and drink port. And along with these lessons they freely imbibed a sublime conviction of their own transcendent importance. On tradesfolk or even men of business they looked down as on an inferior order of mankind. The workers they regarded as a sort of animal, useful to the community, but difficult to handle and impossible to understand. These other classes it was their own function to order and control ; and, to do them justice, they undertook the duty in a serious and conscientious manner. The traditions of public service and administrative efficiency made many of them industrious and capable agents of the State. Their responsibility as landlords (for, as a rule, they owned broad acres) taught them a certain tact in dealing with their tenantry and a pride in the good management of their estates. Their outlook, however, was oddly limited and sadly inconsistent with itself ; and, while they would dole out charity with a generous hand to poor parishioners at Christmas, they were content to keep their labourers on a starvation wage. There were even some who would beam with good humour on the peasant who touched his forelock to them at the roadside, but were equally ready to pepper his legs with shot, if he drove the pheasants in the wrong direction for the guns. In short, they were admirable

persons, so long as they themselves were allowed to rule the roost; most objectionable tyrants if anyone challenged their privilege or dared to cross their will. They imagined themselves to be indispensable, believing, like Sir Leicester Dedlock, the squire in Dickens's novel, "that Nature was on the whole a good idea, but an idea dependent for its execution on your great county families;" and that with any weakening of their influence the world would go to pieces. Like him, too, in their merits no less than their shortcomings, they were "honourable, obstinate, truthful, high-spirited, intensely prejudiced and perfectly unreasonable." Such were the men who had fought Bonaparte and beaten him. They had now to face a more formidable opponent—the people they were despots, upon to rule; but they made no doubt whatever that the issue of the contest would be equally triumphant for themselves.

The people, too, had borne their share in the struggle against France. They had borne it with resignation rather than with any enthusiasm, accepting the war as a necessary evil, but buoyed up by the hope of better things when it was over. In that hope they soon found themselves deceived. The years which followed upon Waterloo were miserable years. Trade was slack. Other nations, hitherto dependent upon British exports, were beginning to manufacture for themselves; and the deadly effects of this foreign competition were soon felt among our folk. Hand-workers had already been ousted from their trade by the rivalry of factory machines; and now the industrial workers, who had been herded to those factories, began to be thrown out of employment. The country labourers were scarcely better off. Owing to the progress of enclosure they had lost what little land they owned—the conditions of their life were hard, their wages wretchedly low. These were often supplemented, it is true, by relief out of the Poor Rates; but the spread of this pernicious system meant the loss of all liberty and self-respect. The number of paupers grew and grew; and the annual sum expended on their upkeep was doubled during the first two decades of the century.

The price of living, too, which ought by rights to have dropped on the return of peace, was artificially sustained. One natural consequence of the war had been to make corn scarce and dear ; it should equally of course have become plentiful and cheap when the war had ceased and our harbours been re-opened to importation from abroad. This prospect, however, was most distasteful to the governing class, whose chief interest lay in land. Dear corn had put money into the landlords' pockets ; cheap corn from overseas would inevitably have meant their loss—and they demurred. In 1815 a law was therefore passed excluding foreign corn from British ports, unless, as was unlikely, the price of home-grown grain should rise at any time above the exorbitant figure of eighty shillings per quarter. The harvests of the years that followed were abnormally poor ; and this law, which bolstered up the wealthy landlords and their prosperous farmer-tenants, inflicted most cruel suffering upon the general mass. Yet the mass was powerless to protest ; for the men who made the law possessed the power also of enforcing it. As Magistrate and Justice of the Peace, the landowner could meet with stern repression any dangerous symptoms of popular discontent. The laws of the realm gave him ample opportunity. The penalties were numerous and appallingly severe. No less than 223 crimes were then punishable with death. A man might be hanged for shooting at a rabbit, for stealing any article worth five shillings or over, for appearing in disguise upon a public road, for writing a threatening letter, for cutting down young trees, or even—most ludicrous of all—for doing damage to Westminster Bridge. For lesser crimes deportation and other barbarous punishments were prescribed ; nor did the magistrates scruple to enforce them. These were hard days. Criminals were often hanged by batches of a dozen. In one notorious case a lad of fourteen years was put to death for stealing linen. In the army the use of the "cat," laid on by many hundred lashes at a time, had not infrequently a fatal end. For such severity some excuse might perhaps have been discovered during the crisis of the

war ; but, when the war was finished, there was none. It was simply part of the theory which the governing class upheld that, unless they ruled the people with a rod of iron, something might happen here that had happened over in France. The real marvel is that it did not.

But things were to grow worse before they could grow better. This policy of repression very naturally gave rise to violence and wild deeds ; and such violence no less naturally led on to more repression. Riots took place among the midland miners and the peasantry of Kent. Strange scenes too were enacted in the neighbourhood of factory towns. There the starving craftsmen of the spinning-wheel or hand-loom were maddened by despair. Their source of livelihood was gone ; and, seeing the new machinery to be the cause, they took a blind revenge. Mills were set ablaze by unknown hands at midnight ; mill-owners were threatened ; shots were fired out of the dark. But the wheels of industrial progress could not thus be stayed ; and the violence of the "Luddites"¹ (as the machine-breakers were called) recoiled on their own heads. Exasperated and perturbed by the condition of the country, the authorities struck back. Rioters were dispersed by armed hussars ; ring-leaders were arrested and savagely condemned ; in 1817 the Habeas Corpus was suspended and imprisonment of unconvicted men thus legalized. Two years later an event occurred which brought things to a head. The agitators of Lancashire made bold to call a meeting of the local malcontents, and over eighty thousand persons marched in procession to St. Peter's Fields on the outskirts of the town of Manchester. The behaviour of the mob was orderly enough ; women and children were present in large numbers ; the bands in loyal good humour struck up "God save the King." But the magistrates were frightened ; a yeomanry contingent had been summoned out ; and, when a speaker rose to demand justice and reform, the order was

¹ So named after one Ned Ludd, a village idiot of a Leicestershire hamlet, who on a certain occasion retaliated on his tormentors by breaking up some machinery.

given for a charge. The yeomanry crashed in with brandished sabres; and within ten minutes St. Peter's Fields were cleared—but not without some bloodshed. Four hundred persons had been wounded; eleven were dead or dying, two of them women, one a child. The "Peterloo Massacre," as the affair was dubbed, sent a thrill of horror through the country; but it decided the authorities on sterner steps. A series of six Acts was passed to make the repetition of such scenes impossible. The holding of public meetings was prohibited; agitators were threatened with severer punishment; and the publication of pamphlets to advocate reform was ruthlessly proscribed. The police were soon busily at work. The magistrates redoubled their zeal. The prisons received their victims; and one unhappy person was even clapped into jail for distributing a pamphlet which turned out on subsequent inquiry to be a religious tract. The "Six Acts," in short, were a piece of legislation after Metternich's own heart; and the Tory Government which passed them was satisfied that Peterloo would not recur again. By others, however, Peterloo was not forgotten. It had stirred in many hearts a deep sense of cruel injustice; and one mad conspiracy at least was undertaken to avenge it. A small gang of crazy hot-heads got together at a house in Cato Street, off Edgware Road. They arranged to catch the members of the Cabinet when assembled for a dinner, waylay them at the doorstep, and, assassinate the lot. Luckily they made a mistake about the house to which the guests had been invited, and, while they were setting watch upon the door of an archbishop, they were rounded up by the police. The poor fanatics paid dearly for their folly, being hanged, and (for the last time in England) beheaded with the axe. But, though their impatient violence had missed its crazy purpose, the cool common-sense of England was soon destined to prevail. Men were beginning to recognize Peterloo for the blundering crime it was, and to realize that this cruel system of repression had overshoot the mark. Before long even the Tory ministers themselves came to see their own mistake, and, about the same

time that the Duke's withdrawal from Verona declared our opposition to such tyranny abroad, they were to prove the reality of their conversion by a policy of greater enlightenment at home.

II

Now the man who was most blamed for the tyranny of the Tory cabinet at home was also, as we might have guessed, the man who had lent some countenance at least to the tyranny of continental "Tories" at Vienna—the Foreign Secretary, Lord Castlereagh. Castlereagh was no believer in soft government; nor, so long as he lived at any rate, was there any sign of weakening shown. Yet, hard man though he was, the condition of the country and the unpopularity of this unpleasant policy were slowly wearing him down. Doubts and anxieties preyed upon his health, and at last he abandoned the struggle. One day in the August of 1822—some while, that is, after the Cato Street conspiracy and shortly before the European Congress of Verona—Castlereagh was found, his throat slit with a pen-knife, dead by his own hand. So it came about that the Duke of Wellington was sent to represent this country at the Congress; and the man who sanctioned his withdrawal from it was not Castlereagh, but his ancient rival and his successor in office, George Canning. Between the new Foreign Secretary and the old there was a more than superficial contrast. Castlereagh, as we have seen, was stolid, obstinate, and taciturn, the typical strong, silent man of British politics. Canning, on the other hand, was gifted with many accomplishments and graces. He had made some mark as an amateur poet. He had a nice vein of humour and had written a series of clever satires for the press. He possessed a charming manner and an exquisite voice; and, above all, he was a powerful orator, equally able to work upon his hearers' feelings or to stamp some brilliant epigram upon their minds. During the course of the Napoleonic wars he had held office under the younger Pitt;

of late, however, he had fallen somewhat into the background of English party politics and had determined to take up an appointment in the East. He was on the eve of embarking for India, when he heard of Castlereagh's suicide; and this altered his whole career. He stayed in England; Lord Liverpool, the Premier, made him an offer of the vacant place; and he thereupon became both Foreign Secretary and leader of the Lower House. Canning's mind did not travel in a groove. Though a Tory by upbringing, he saw quite clearly that Toryism itself could go too far; and both at home and abroad he set himself to direct the course of British policy along more liberal lines. The change of attitude which the Cabinet displayed during the five ensuing years was a proof, not merely of his own imaginative outlook, but also of his ability to carry others with him and to convince less open and less generous minds.

In some of his Tory colleagues, however, Canning was particularly fortunate. There were men among them as alert and as eager for reform as he; and, since home politics were not his special sphere, the credit for such reforms as were effected must go to these colleagues rather than to him. One was Sir Robert Peel, now rising to the vigour of his manhood, a sane, well-balanced mind, not afraid, if honestly convinced, to go back upon a prejudice or admit himself at fault. In Lord Liverpool's new cabinet he undertook the office of Home Secretary, and he began his work by instituting a revision of the antiquated criminal code. His reforms were drastic; in the case of some hundred felonies hitherto punishable with death, he prescribed a milder sentence. Within four years nearly three hundred obsolete Acts were deleted from the Statute Book. The cruel game laws were in part at least rescinded; and the barbarous use of man-traps, used by landlords to catch poachers, was henceforth disallowed. Peel's work brought two advantages. Juries which had hitherto deliberately acquitted, because they felt the penalties to be too strong, were now the more ready to convict a rogue, because they

could count upon a punishment more fitted to his crime. But the reform went deeper still ; it began to bridge the gulf, now perilously widening, between the poor and rich. Once the law was seen to be founded upon justice and not upon the narrow prejudice of class, the popular resentment began to be appeased ; a quieter tone prevailed, and for a while at least the agitations of the previous years died down. This change, however, could scarcely have resulted had it not been for other measures of reform which struck more directly at the root of discontent. To steal or poach is not the habit of the normal man unless he is half-starving ; and what people really needed was economic justice as well as political and legal. To give them this was the endeavour of another among Canning's colleagues, William Huskisson by name, who by Lord Liverpool's appointment was made President of the Board of Trade. Like Peel, Huskisson was remarkably broad-minded for a Tory. He had been a diligent student of economic theories ; and contrary to the usual preconceptions of his class he was a believer in Free Trade. The time was not ripe indeed for a full and final acceptance of this great commercial principle ; nor is this the moment to describe in detail the tremendous controversy which has raged around the problem. It is enough to state what Huskisson achieved. In the first place, he relaxed the antiquated Navigation Laws, a check laid long ago in Cromwell's time on the access of foreign vessels to our shores. Further, he continued the work, which Walpole had begun, of reducing the customs tariff upon imports ; and thus soon by these two sound measures he set free the natural flow of raw materials so sorely needed by our manufacturers. Nor did he neglect the still more urgent question of the people's food. The oppressive Corn Laws were allowed indeed to stand ; but Huskisson was able to modify their rigour by the introduction of a sliding scale, whereby the duty upon corn was lowered as the price of corn rose high. This offered some relief to the hunger of the poor. The worst of their sufferings appeared for the moment to be over. A languishing trade began to thrive

again ; and, as the flow of imports grew, the prevalence of unemployment was diminished. Thus, under the administration of Peel, Huskisson, and Canning, the credit of British statesmanship was handsomely redeemed. The cloud of revolution, which in 1822 had seemed so threatening and so near, was lifted. Tranquillity, if not contentment, reigned ; and this we owed, not to a brutal triumph of unbending force, but to a new spirit of sweet reasonableness and cool common-sense.

But it was above all in foreign politics—which were Canning's special sphere—that the fruits of the new Tory enlightenment were most clearly manifest. Not that there was here any instantaneous or startling change of front ; it was rather a question of pushing our previous policy to its logical conclusion. Even Castlereagh himself had been, as we have said, no blind admirer of continental despotism. He had shown plainly on occasion that England could be no party to its wilder schemes ; and, if Canning got most of the credit for cutting actually adrift, it was not because he struck out along wholly original lines. Rather it was because he possessed the power which his predecessor lacked, of gauging the European situation at a glance, of determining by a quick decision which way his country's influence should fall, and, above all, of infecting even the stolid British Parliament with his own enthusiastic eagerness to see justice done abroad. When a difficult and complex situation was puzzling duller minds, he would solve all doubts by an unerring diagnosis, and illuminate, as it were, the whole political horizon by the lightning flash of some clear, telling phrase. With such a phrase, for instance, he was now to define England's policy over the most perplexing problem of the day, and even it may be said to fix her foreign policy for a century to come. At the moment of Castlereagh's death the rulers of Europe were much disturbed, as we have seen, over the state of things in Spain. The revolution which had there broken out was a deadly affront to their most cherished principle ; and, rather than see a people dictating a constitution to its lawful king, the

Powers were determined to restore Ferdinand's authority, even, if need should be, by force of arms. The French were actually preparing to launch an army across the Pyrenees. Canning saw in a flash that such an act of interference was opposed to all English notions of fair play; nor did he hesitate to speak his mind. On the Duke's withdrawal from the Congress of Verona, he declared that intervention in another State's affairs was both "dangerous and useless." "Every nation for itself, and God for all of us" was the keyword of his policy; and upon that principle henceforward this country took its stand. The protest came too late to do Spain much benefit. The French army set Ferdinand back upon his throne: the democratic constitution was annulled; the revolutionary leaders hanged. Nevertheless we had declared our attitude; and further developments soon made it necessary to define that attitude more sharply, this time with more success. Though King Ferdinand had recovered his position at Madrid, he had still to win back the Spanish colonies in South America which had recently seceded from his crown; and the French were now suggesting that, if the task was undertaken, their services to Ferdinand could not better be repaid than by transferring these possessions to themselves. The idea of the French and Spanish monarchs thus callously bargaining with the liberties of Peru, Mexico, and Chile brought Canning to his feet. He determined to show that his warning against intervention was no bluff. A message was dispatched to inform the two predatory monarchs that, if they attacked the American republics, they would find themselves at war with England too. Nor was Canning's ultimatum a solitary voice. He received invaluable backing from the United States. In a historic pronouncement their President, Monroe, declared that no meddling by European Powers would be tolerated on his side the Atlantic. America henceforward was to be for Americans alone.¹ The effect of our bold stand was instantaneous.

¹ Hence arose the celebrated "Monroe Doctrine" which has ever since kept America in isolation from European politics—neither meddling here nor allowing us to meddle there.

The two monarchs knuckled under; and the triumph of Canning's policy was complete. It was a real stroke of imaginative statesmanship to undertake this new responsibility beyond the normal range of our immediate interests; for it served at once to discredit the dangerous craze for "intervention" and also to remind the interventionists that England was not alone in her defence of freedom. By championing the cause of American democracy, not merely had we struck the most telling blow yet seen to the enemies of democracy in Europe; we had also, as Canning put it in his memorable boast, "called in the New World to redress the balance of the Old."

Though threat of war had been a useful and perhaps a necessary weapon in the diplomatic duel against France and Spain, yet Canning himself was certainly the last person in the world to wish to use it. His chief desire was to see peace between the nations, nobody meddling in other people's business, and England least of all. But fate was not to be so kind to him again; and, though the American trouble had ended without bloodshed, a crisis presently arose in Eastern Europe in which even Canning himself was compelled to intervene. This time the storm-centre was Greece. Since the Mohammedan invasion at the end of the fourteenth century, the Greek people had lain under the tyranny of the Turks. What that meant, we have seen, in our own day, in Armenia, in the Balkans, and elsewhere; for the Turk has never abandoned the habits of a foreign conqueror. Though allowed considerable liberty in local administration and in the exercise of their religious faith, the subject population of the Greek peninsula were still at the mercy of their savage rulers, who subjected them to every form of open violence and rapine. Murder or robbery committed by a Turk went habitually unpunished. Extortion of every kind was practised by officials. There was no machinery of justice, no court of appeal. It was therefore not surprising that Greek patriots, inspired by the revolutionary ideals bred in France, should have resolved to strike a blow for liberty. A secret society called

the "Hetairia Philiké" had taken the first steps. Fired by the noble traditions of their ancient past, these men made bold in 1821 to raise the standard of revolt. They had slaughtered (often with torture) every Turk they could lay hands on, and for the moment at least the Morea became theirs. The Turks retaliated with a massacre *en masse* of the Greek population in outlying towns and islands; and then had undertaken a regular campaign to recover their hold upon the province. In England sympathy had run strongly for the Greeks; supplies were privately sent out to them; and amongst others Lord Byron, the poet and author of the celebrated "Isles of Greece," had gone out to their assistance. Byron died of fever in the Missolonghi marshes, before he could render them much service; yet the example of his sacrifice was not merely an inspiration to the Greeks, but a new tie forged between ourselves and their endeavour. As their resistance, weakened too often by disunion, was slowly but decisively worn down, British anxieties became acute. The Sultan had appealed for help to Mahomet Ali, the powerful Viceroy of Mussulman rule in Egypt. A large army and a powerful fleet had been sent across under Ibrahim, the Viceroy's son. In 1827 the Morea was reoccupied and Athens reduced. Canning hitherto had held his hand. He knew that the Russian Tsar, Alexander's less principled successor, was itching to "intervene," not so much with intent to set Greece free as to crush the Turks and absorb their large dominions. This did not by any means suit Canning's book; and he now proposed that Russia, France, and England should intervene conjointly, not to make war upon the Turks, but to mediate as neutrals and to arrange, if possible, a peaceful settlement. An armistice between the belligerents was urged; and a British squadron sent out to watch events. Then a startling thing occurred. The Turkish fleet was anchored in the harbour known in ancient times as Pylos, now Navarino Bay. When Codrington, our admiral, approached the harbour with a mixed force of British,

Russian, and French ships, he had no intention of attack ; but a polite request that a Turkish ship should move was met by blank refusal ; a boat, put out to cut the vessel's moorings, was received by hostile fire ; and within a few minutes the two fleets were at it hammer and tongs. The Turkish ships were simply cut to ribbands ; and, at the end of two hours' bombardment, there was scarcely a single hulk but was either sunk or sinking. Such was the outcome of Canning's "peaceful intervention." The sword had been drawn with a vengeance ; and, though Britain now drew back, the Russian Tsar pressed on. It took time, however, to force the Sultan's hand ; and it was not till 1830 that the independence of Greece was formally acknowledged and the new State erected under a separate crown.

This consummation Canning himself had not lived long enough to see. In the spring of 1827, upon Lord Liverpool's death, he had become Prime Minister ; but his health was already failing. For six months he struggled on. Then on the eve of Navarino he had died ; and with his passing the enlightened policy for which he stood passed also. His brief career, though it laid the foundations on which our European policy was afterwards to rest, was regarded by his contemporaries as too risky and adventurous. The zeal he had kindled in others was merely the reflection of his own enthusiasm ; and, once the eloquence which had kept the flame alive was gone, the Tory government sank back into the doubtful twilight of its old benighted ways.

III

The truth is that the Tory party's conversion was no better than skin-deep. They could not bring themselves to realize that the world around them was in flux and that, unless they changed as it changed, they would be left behind. The Duke of Wellington, who became Premier after

Canning, was a man of this stiff, unbending type. Whatever imagination he possessed for soldiering, he possessed none at all for politics. The news of Navarino filled him with undisguised dismay. The liberties of Greece to his mind meant less than nothing; and the destruction of the Turkish fleet, which rejoiced more generous spirits, was simply (in the famous phrase he used of it) an "untoward incident." So, utterly unconscious of the risks that he was running, this honest, upright, straight-laced, military-minded gentleman blundered back into all the old futilities of narrow Toryism. He dismissed Huskisson and other more progressive members of the cabinet, retaining Peel alone. For the distresses of the country, which were once again becoming dangerously acute, he had no remedy but a rigid enforcement of the law. Acts of robbery, arson, and mob-violence, committed with increasing frequency by hunger-stricken labourers, were met merely by blind repression, police raids, and the Riot Act. Poachers and game-keepers fought battles-royal; but nothing further was done to mitigate the Game Laws. On the contrary, every step was taken to strengthen the Government's hand; the old local provision of beadles, watchmen, and the like was voted inadequate; and through Peel's agency was organized a new regular constabulary, known as "Bobbies" or "Peelers," after their author's name. So things went on, till the hero of Waterloo was one of the best hated men in the whole country; and a year or two later an angry London mob actually broke every window in his mansion. Yet, however incapable of seeing a way out of it, the Duke was not insensible to this calamitous condition of affairs. He dreaded above all the idea of civil war; and such a fear it was that drove him to the one generous act of policy which marked the brief period of his power. This was a concession which much against his will he extended to his own countrymen the Irish. After well-nigh thirty years, these unhappy folk were still smarting under the insult of the "Union" which compelled them to look to Westminster and not to Dublin, for government and law. Their griev-

ance, moreover, was rendered the more bitter, because, though a Catholic people in the main, they were precluded by the Test Act from sending a Catholic to Parliament. Pitt, when he passed the Act of Union, had promised them redress; the promise had been falsified and nothing done; but now in 1828 this disability of the Irish electors was thrown suddenly into the limelight in an unexpected fashion. A vacancy occurring in the seat for County Clare, a certain Roman Catholic named Daniel O'Connell put forward as a candidate, and, as was only natural, he was elected with a big majority. When, however, he arrived in due course at Westminster, the difficulties began. He was told to take the customary oath, refused, and on refusal was ordered to withdraw. A fresh election was then held in County Clare, again O'Connell was a candidate, and again he was triumphant at the polls. Ireland was in a ferment. British opinion was seriously alarmed; and eventually Peel informed his leader that the game was up: it was a choice between open rebellion or retreat. Then the Duke, though hating the necessity, gave way, and a Bill for the "emancipation" of the Catholics was produced. But there was still an obstacle. The King discovered conscientious scruples about signing it, blustered about the binding nature of his coronation oath, vowed that, if further pressed, he would retire to Hanover, and finally dismissed the Cabinet. His Majesty, however, very soon became aware that there was nobody to put into their place. The Duke came back; the Bill was passed, and first among the Catholics to take a seat in Parliament was the twice rejected member for County Clare. The Duke's belated wisdom had saved the land from civil war; but happily its destinies were not to hang much longer upon his slow decisions. It was not often that the death or accession of a Hanoverian sovereign was now a matter of great import to the State; but the sudden collapse of George IV had one most beneficial and far-reaching consequence. It was customary in those days, when a reign ended, to dissolve the existing Parliament. So, when William IV took the

crown, Parliament was dissolved. An election followed ; and, when the Duke's ministry returned to Westminster, they discovered that the Tory ascendancy was gone. After nearly a quarter of a century of political extinction, the Whigs held the field once more.

CHAPTER III

THE REFORM BILL

I

HAD England at the accession of King William IV still been what its continental neighbours mainly were, an exclusively agricultural country, much might have fallen out very differently. There might have been an English Revolution on the model of the French; there might merely have been more riots and more governmental tyranny. There certainly would not have been what actually there was—a great constitutional advance towards true democracy, voluntarily undertaken by the governing class itself. The truth is that, as so often in the course of our national development, the commercial instincts of our people were now once more to exercise a vital influence upon the growth of their institutions. We have seen already, through the progress of the centuries, that, whereas the agricultural habit led to feudalism and class tyranny, town life and manufacture made in the opposite direction for independence and free thought. It was the townsfolk of southern England who led the van of the Reformation; it was the shopkeepers and merchants who had been the backbone of resistance to the Stuarts; and so now the Industrial Revolution, which had recently cast the whole social life of the people into the melting-pot, was also paving the way for a grand political change. For England was no longer peopled mainly by squires and their dependents; in a hundred thriving cities there was growing up a class—almost unknown as yet in other countries—who were no

less important in their way than the great landlords of the shires. Owners of factories and mills and coal mines, controllers of warehouses and joint-stock companies, heads of trading houses, broker firms, and banks—these were the product of a new age of Iron and Steam. That such men were well-to-do goes without saying. Some were rich beyond the dreams of avarice; and step by step, as machinery was improved and production thereby multiplied, from rich they became richer. Yet, however big their incomes or magnificent their mansions, these men were not of the aristocracy itself; many of them had actually risen from the ranks; taken as a whole they were regarded somewhat askance by high society. Engaged as they were in the despised trade of making money (instead of merely receiving it, like gentlemen, in the form of tithes or rents), these men of business were broadly lumped together with the still larger company of clerks, shopkeepers, and tradesfolk as the great Middle Class. Now the men of the middle class, being dependent for success upon their brains, were sturdy thinkers; and what ideas were running in their heads it is well worth our trouble to inquire. The outstanding feature of the middle class creed was the doctrine of Free Trade and all that followed from it. This doctrine had taken its birth towards the close of the preceding century, in the work of the great Scottish political economist, Adam Smith. In a treatise which he called "The Wealth of Nations," Adam Smith had roundly denounced those artificial obstructions to commercial enterprise which were the lingering relic of an age when political economy was little studied and still less understood. The old idea had been, as we have often pointed out, to protect all domestic industries by preventing competition from outside. Thus, until 1770, cotton had been practically excluded from this country lest it should prove a fatal rival to our home-grown wool; and thus again more recently the Corn Laws were established to promote the interest of our farming class. Such restrictions, however, Adam Smith declared to be based upon a fallacy. Competition, as he saw it, was the very breath of com-

mercial life and the source of all prosperity. When every nation and every individual are straining their resources to overreach or undersell their neighbours, the result, he argued, would be a maximum of effort, a maximum of production, and consequently at the same time a minimum of cost. Hamper competition, and you inevitably restrict supply; and, as every one knows nowadays, inadequate supply will result in higher prices, whereas abundance will result in low. Adam Smith's theories were taken up by manufacturers, and pressed by them to their most extreme conclusion. His disciples—the men of the “Manchester School,” as they were called—went far beyond the prophet. They declared that the only road to prosperity lay in the most ruthless competition; that it was the primary duty of a business man to look to his own interest and to overreach his neighbour, more especially if that neighbour were a poor helpless working man; and that to pay low wages was as much a matter of sound commercial principle as to sell an article for the most that it would bring. Even if the poor man might suffer in the process, he would gain, so they maintained, in the long run; for through such unfettered and unlicensed competition would arise a prosperity in which all alike would share. “Every man for himself, and God for all of us” might have been their parody of Canning's famous cry.

Whatever the merits or shortcomings of this theory, it was at least progressive, and the middle class of the towns was not a class to lag behind. Nor, hard and inhuman as the theory must appear, were its disciples so utterly indifferent to the condition of the masses. Their behaviour doubtless varied; and most employers were hard taskmasters. But they lived at closer quarters to their underlings than did the big landlords of the country-side; and some at any rate among them felt that there was somehow something wrong. They did not, of course, admit that the fault lay with themselves or with their theory. They preferred after the British manner to put the blame on Parliament. The close oligarchy of squires who ruled at Westminster were simply ruling in the interest of a decaying

caste. They did not understand the needs of the whole nation, because they did not represent the nation as a whole. The remedy for present discontents was therefore to reform the methods of election, to admit a wider circle to the franchise, and, taking away its member from some sleepy agricultural hamlet, to transfer the privilege to some thriving populous manufacturing town. That was the plain common-sense of a dangerous situation, as the ordinary level-headed Englishman conceived of it. There were others, however, less easily satisfied and less moderate in their views—men who had been deeply stirred by the wrongs and miseries they saw around them, men who still regarded the French Revolution as the greatest and best event that had ever happened in the world, and who were even ready to turn England upside down for the sake of setting existing wrongs to right. Such thinkers were not common; they were working often alone or in small groups; they were regarded by most with horror or with pity, and talked of as “Radicals” who wanted to reform the social order by digging up its “roots.” But such talk as theirs was only to be expected from the mouths of philanthropists or cranks; and the majority of thinking Englishmen were perfectly assured that the roots of society were well enough. There was perhaps a bough here that needed trimming, or a rotten branch there that needed lopping back; but that was all. The English middle class was far too prosperous to demand heroic measures. Reform, if reform were needed, must at least come “bit by bit.”

Now of this wider and more moderate body of opinion, which we have called the middle class, the Whig party was in some degree a mirror. True, Whig statesmen differed but little in their personal character or social standing from the Tory statesmen who opposed them in the House. They too were for the most part landowners; they too were educated at the Public School and University; and, if anything, they were even more haughty and self-important than their rivals. But the whole historical tradition of their party made the Whigs more dependent than the Tories on

the middle classes' vote, and therefore more sympathetic to middle-class ideals. When in the reign of Charles II Shaftesbury had founded the Green Ribbon Club from which they took their origin, the principles for which he and his followers had stood were liberty of life for the subject, religious freedom for all sects, and strict limitation of the Crown's authority. For support they had looked above all to the commercial classes, to the men who had fought with Cromwell against the double tyranny of Church and King. And now, though times had greatly changed since Shaftesbury's day, and though of their three great principles the last two were solidly established, the Whigs still remained in theory the champion of the people's liberty and the allies of the commercial middle class. Their doctrines were vague ; but they were prepared to " trust the people." They were bound by no such selfish prejudice as made the Tories cling like limpets to the old régime. They were prepared, if need be, to fling open the markets to Free Trade and to sacrifice the interests of the landlord class. Above all they were prepared for the reform of Parliament ; and, when in the first year of William IV they at length returned to office, it was to the reform of Parliament that they directed their first thoughts.

II

That the system of Parliamentary election then in vogue was hopelessly out of date is obvious. If the franchise had merely remained what it had been in the days of the Plantagenets, it would have been bad enough. But things were worse than that ; for during the eighteenth century a withering blight had come over the politics of England. Till then no money value had been attached to votes ; those who possessed the privilege had therefore no particular inducement to keep others out of it, and most independent persons who owned a piece of land or a house worth anything might be electors. When, however, the Whigs of Walpole's day began the evil practice of buying people's

votes, it was a very different matter. Then, as was natural, those who possessed it strove to keep the valuable privilege exclusively to themselves, or parted with it only for a good round sum. Thus, while the population of the country was steadily increasing, the number of voters grew rather less than more. In some towns the mayor and corporation had gained the sole right of electing the borough member. In other constituencies the right was vested in the owners of particular properties or fields. In the notorious instance of Old Sarum, for example, there remained no inhabitants at all; and the right of election belonged to the happy owner of a single piece of plough. Elsewhere the local magnate had bought up all such property as carried a vote with it, and so had the constituency, as the phrase ran, in his "pocket." Thus there were earls and dukes who could claim as their own more than half a dozen seats in the House of Commons and who filled them with creatures of their choice; and so it came about that of some five hundred English members barely a man was in any way representative of the people itself; three hundred, it was reckoned, had actually been elected by one hundred and sixty persons all told; and this out of a total population of nearly fifteen millions. In Scotland things were even worse than in England. There some thirty individuals chose the man to represent the 160,000 inhabitants of Edinburgh; and in the island of Bute we are told of a solitary voter who appointed himself chairman at his own election meeting, proposed and seconded his own nomination to the seat, and then solemnly proceeded to announce himself returned by his own unanimous vote. Such a state of things would in itself have been sufficiently ridiculous, supposing the distribution of the population to have remained constant. But, as a result of the Industrial Revolution, a great shifting had occurred towards the north and west, and, while vast hordes of workers were collected in the manufacturing towns of Lancashire or Warwick, the little market boroughs of the eastern and southern shires dwindled into insignificance. Yet these retained the right

of sending their representative to Parliament, while the new towns still went memberless. Can it be wondered that the populace was restive or that they felt the historic birthright of self-government, for which their forefathers had fought and died, to have been filched away from them! Had the Whigs not come to office or the Reform Bill not seen light, it is not too much to say that blood would have flowed in England before many years were out.

Such, then, was the cause in which the Whigs were now preparing to do battle and to tilt against the serried ranks of reactionary Toryism. The lists were ready for the great tournament of parties; the champions were arrayed. Lord Grey as Premier undertook the leading of the House of Lords. In the Commons he chose as his lieutenant Lord John Russell, an able young enthusiast of noble birth, who combined a generous liberality of outlook with a singular power of clear, incisive speech. Lord John could well be trusted, if any man could, to pilot the Bill through the many shoals and pitfalls of that critical assembly; but it was first of prime importance that the Cabinet itself should be united upon the details of the Bill to be produced. There were many heart-searchings over various points. Secret ballot was proposed only to be rejected. Ministers were agreed that the franchise must be opened to a far wider circle of the people, but hesitated where to draw the line. Eventually, however, a certain unanimity was reached; and the proposed reforms were drafted, of which the main were these: *first*, every householder whose holding should be rated as worth £10 a year was henceforth to have a vote; *second*, the entire distribution of Parliamentary seats was to be reorganized; on the one hand, all boroughs of less than two thousand inhabitants were to lose their member altogether, while boroughs of four thousand and under were to be allowed a single member but no more; on the other hand, new members were to be allotted to the increasingly important, but hitherto unrepresented, populations of the great industrial towns. These, along with other proposals which here may be neglected, formed the contents

of the Bill. Its secret was well kept; and outside the members of the Cabinet itself not a soul knew what was coming when on 1 March, 1831, the Commons met to hear it read for the first time. Crowds were assembled in the street outside, and the scene within was one of unparalleled excitement. There were cheers from the Whig benches as the diminutive Lord John rose to the table and bit by bit with cool deliberation unfolded the secret of the ministerial plan. Then, as he proceeded, by request, to read the long list of the disfranchised boroughs, sardonic, mocking laughter came from the members whose seats were singled out by the reformers for political extinction. The rage of the Tories knew no bounds; they were still almost equal to the Whigs in numbers; and, when Lord John had finished, they opened a heavy bombardment upon the whole principle of the Bill. Arguments of every sort and kind were adduced against it. Sir Robert Peel declared that the old system was the only method of securing Parliamentary seats for the rising talent of the day, the Pitts, the Burkes, the Cannings. Inglis, the member for Oxford University, went further still in his denunciations. He denied that representation of the people had ever been the theory of election. It was for the King to nominate, or to place the power of nomination in whatever hands he chose. The best men should be sent to Parliament; and hitherto, however chosen, the best men had been sent. That was perhaps a moderately true statement of the past; but in 1831 its truth was beginning to be more than doubtful. "The best men" had bungled things too grievously of late; and the force of the argument was spent. Despite these vigorous onslaughts from the Tory benches, the First Reading of the Bill was passed through without a vote.¹ But

¹ There are three stages in the discussion of a Bill. The first reading merely admits it for discussion by the House; at this stage there is rarely a debate and nowadays never a division. Then, before a division is taken on the second reading, the *principle* of the Bill is discussed. If that principle is accepted and the Bill thus "read" a second time, the third stage follows. The contents of the Bill are debated by the House "in Committee" clause by clause; and then in its final form it is read for the third time and the last.

the division taken at the Second Reading soon made it clear to every eye that the Government was without sufficient backing in the House and must either yield or fall. That was a tremendous and memorable scene. The House was crowded to overflowing; and so equally divided were the members that nobody could even make a guess whether "Ayes" or "Noes" would have it. As the numbers were read out, says Macaulay, who was present, a sudden silence fell; "you could have heard a pin drop." 302 voted for the Bill; 301 against it. "Then we shook hands and clapped each other on the back and went out laughing and crying and huzzaing into the lobby." But, though saved, as it were, by the skin of their teeth, the Whigs' triumph could not last. When the Bill came under discussion clause by clause before the third and final reading, a wrecking amendment brought a Government defeat; and Grey resigned. The King came down in person; Parliament was dissolved; and the country was in the throes of an election once again. Yet, truth to tell, this was the best thing that could have happened for the Whigs. The people were now with them heart and soul; and, when they came back to Westminster, there were to be no more divisions with a bare majority of one.

When hopes are aroused, as they had been by the Reform Bill, the British people is not easily baulked of its desire. The country was boiling over with excitement and enthusiasm. The whole middle class, from the big capitalist at the top to the humble clerk at the bottom, was solid for the Whigs. Even many of the country squires were shaken in their allegiance to the Tory faith. The "Radical" reformers, regarding the Reform Bill as a first instalment of their own more sweeping plans, backed it with all their might; and, though it offered to the masses no actual prospect of a vote, the interest of the working men was none the less aroused. In such an atmosphere bribery and the bad old tradition of the hustings went for nothing. Tenants voted Whig in flat defiance of their landlords' threats. The Tory candidates were hooted, burnt in effigy,

and scarcely permitted to show their face in public. The upshot was that the Whigs returned to Parliament with a clear majority of 136. The Bill was now certain of passing the Lower House; but there were innumerable delays. As the debate in Committee went forward, amendment after amendment was suggested with no other purpose than to give trouble and waste time. The Tory rank and file were adepts at such tactics. Wetherell, the member for Bristol, gained unenviable fame as an obstructionist; and even Peel himself lent his support to mean endeavours to destroy or alter each successive clause. But the country was behind Lord Grey and Lord John Russell, intent upon "the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill." The Whigs, knowing this, stuck bravely to their guns; and at length by a snatch vote, taken when most of the Tory protagonists were absent, the Third Reading was passed. The Bill was through the Commons; what would be its fate with the Lords?

Unhappily in the Lords the Tory element was not merely strong, but overwhelming. Led by the Duke of Wellington himself, they refused all argument of reason. Lord Grey's eloquence and the prayers of the Whig Chancellor, who, some say, went down upon his very knees to move them, were alike quite unavailing. In the early hours of 8 October, 1831, the Reform Bill was thrown out by 43. There is probably no moment in recent history when Britain came so near to civil war as in the weeks that followed. If the people were excited at the time of the election, they were worse than excited now. The unpopular member for Bristol, on paying a visit to the town, was compelled to flee for safety over the house-tops. Notorious enemies of the Bill were pelted in their coaches, dragged from their horses, and made to go in terror of their lives. At Birmingham a monster meeting of a hundred thousand persons met in solemn protest against the action of the Lords. There was open talk of arming; and workmen's associations bought guns and began to drill. The outlook day by day

grew more ominous and more critical; but to his eternal credit Lord Grey kept his head. He determined to give the Peers an opportunity to go back upon their blunder by offering them the Bill a second time. If only to save their faces, he was prepared to make concessions; so he changed some unimportant details here and there; and the Bill in its altered form was carried through the Commons before the year was out. The question now in everybody's mind was, Would the Lords swallow the sugar-coated pill, and, if they would not, what then? On 7 May, 1832, the Lords for the second time cast their vote against Reform, and for a second time Lord Grey resigned. The crisis had arrived. The King sent to call Wellington. If the Duke had taken office, the consequences no longer stood in doubt. The country was quiet; but it was the hush of a people determined how to act. London and the big towns were simultaneously to rise. All public offices and banks were to be closed; and the Duke's Government to be dared to do its worst. But, as over the crisis of Irish Emancipation, the Duke's iron nerve had failed. His Government to be was never formed. The King called Lord Grey to power again; and this time Grey came armed with a new weapon of offence. Throughout the previous weeks a bitter struggle had been going on between the Premier and the King. Grey had striven to extort a promise, that, if the Lords continued their resistance, new peers should be created in sufficient numbers to swamp their majority against the Bill. The King was tough, and for weeks he had refused to make the promise Grey demanded; but on 18 May he yielded. Once it was known that the Whigs had this new weapon at their command, the Tory obstinacy broke down. Most of the Bill's opponents abstained from voting altogether; and on 4 June it was passed for good and all by a clear majority of 80. So ended the great contest between the Peerage and the People, as the famous duel ended between the old lady's mop and the ocean. "The Atlantic was roused. Mrs. Partington's spirit was up. But I need not tell you the contest was

unequal. The old lady was excellent at a slop or a puddle, but she should not have meddled with a tempest. The Atlantic beat Mrs. Partington."¹ And the People had beaten the Peers.

By the Reform Bill's passage in 1832 England took a long step nearer to democracy; but she did not thereby arrive at democracy itself. There still remained two classes, a class which governed and had votes, and a class which was governed and had none; and of the two the latter class was out of all proportion the more numerous. Under the new conditions only the householder of a £10 yearly rating² was entitled to the franchise. This, it has been reckoned, gave the vote to little more than one-twentieth of the whole population—the comfortable and well-to-do, tradesmen, business men, or farmers, folk who kept a parlour and perhaps a maid. The working man who paid but a weekly shilling or two for his cheap pigsty of a cottage was shut out. The Reform Bill, in short, was passed, and was intended to be passed, for the advantage not of the lower, but of the middle class. The middle class had been taken into voluntary partnership by the aristocracy; and the two together were able for half a century and more to hold their own against the rising tide of Labour. The real consequence of the Reform was, as we now see it, a social fusion of the landed gentry with the manufacturing and commercial orders. Bit by bit, men who had been regarded as upstarts and outsiders began to be admitted to country seats of the nobility or the drawing-rooms of Park Lane. From this social fusion issued that interesting and novel type, the mid-Victorian gentleman—rich from the proceeds of a thriving trade; hard in his business dealings, as befitted a disciple of old Adam Smith; honest according to his lights, strict and straight-laced in his

¹ Quoted from Sydney Smith, a Somersetshire parson.

² In the county constituencies (as opposed to the towns) the £10 limit applied only to *long* leases; nothing less than a £50 holding was sufficient, if the house was held upon a *yearly* lease.

personal behaviour, easily shocked, an heir to the Puritan tradition to which the middle class had all along held firm; something of a snob, contemptuous of the lower class beneath him, and intensely jealous of his own position in genteel society; possessing some veneer at any rate of culture, and eager to fill his home with the best that money could buy, but execrable in his taste for architecture, furniture, or pictures; fond of talking about fine ideals, less fond perhaps of putting them to practice; sentimental, self-satisfied, well-meaning, but always with an eye on the main chance. Victorian society was a curious and contradictory mixture. If it had many virtues, it had vices too; and both in the main came into it along with that great influx of energetic, money-making people, whom the Whigs had called in from the new commercial order "to redress the balance of the old." In the sphere of actual politics the results of the Reform were less apparent. ✓ Whatever its supporters may have expected of the Bill, it did, in fact, but little to change the character of the Lower House. Members were very much the same before and after, products of an aristocratic education, generally, if not always, of aristocratic birth. Yet beneath the surface there was a more subtle change. The same faces might indeed be seen on the Whig and the Tory benches; but it was not the same power that put them there. Whether Inglis was right or wrong in his theory of election, the fact remains that members in the past had in no real sense been responsible to the People. Now, they were responsible to at least one section of it. Representation had become an actuality. Democracy was in sight; and it only needed the further forward steps, taken in the successive Acts of 1867, 1885, and 1917, to establish a system of universal suffrage and so complete the process begun in 1832. Parliament was one thing before the Reform Bill, quite a different thing after it; and, as though it were to mark symbolically the great change which had arrived, fate now doomed to destruction the venerable palace in which through nearly five

hundred years the Houses of Parliament had met. In 1834 a disastrous fire broke out among the buildings; and, excepting the great Fourteenth Century Hall which still survives, everything was gutted. The present building, like the present Parliament, was raised on the foundations of the old.

CHAPTER IV

THE RULE OF THE WHIGS

WHEN the King affixed his signature to the Reform Bill and the Bill thereby became an Act, its enemies were more than confident in their prediction of untold and irretrievable disaster. Power was about to be placed in raw, unpractised hands. Wild radical experiments were sure to follow fast ; nobody perhaps could tell to what lengths "reform" might go ; but, as like as not, the new democracy would proceed to make England a Republic, and the King be found to have signed unwittingly the warrant for the extinction of his crown. At best, the Parliament of the new order would be an unstable, unpractical assembly, as little capable of prudent legislation as some think a Labour Government would be to-day. Such gloomy prophecies proved wholly false. The character of Parliament for many years to come remained, as we have said, pretty much the same as it had been before ; and, so far from giving substance to their opponent's fears, the policy of the Whigs was to prove a bitter disappointment to their own more eager followers. The fact is that with the passage of the great reform the impulse of their enthusiasm was almost spent. From now onwards until 1841 they enjoyed a period of unchallenged power, first under the leadership of Lord Grey himself, then after 1837 of Lord Melbourne. Such a chance was offered them as rarely falls to the lot of any party ; but they failed upon the whole to make good use of it. They passed two or three most salutary measures ; they set a few of the more glaring

scandals right; but there the impetus was stayed. They felt that for the present they had gone far enough. The courage and the energy were lacking to undertake a thorough overhauling of the rusty, inefficient machinery of State. Even the Corn Laws, the most cruel of all injustices, were left untouched.

The policy of the Whigs, to put it in a word, was not so much an adventure into unknown paths, but a cautious continuation of the ideals of Canning. In foreign policy especially they upheld the principles which he had planted. Peace between the nations, liberty for each to manage its own affairs, and immunity from outside interference, that was their watchword as it had been his. Nor did such a policy require so brave an effort, as it had done in the past. Our withdrawal from the European Concert was now more or less complete; and amongst other things the Whigs' task was greatly simplified by a fortunate accident of the royal succession. When in 1837 King William IV died, the crown went in absence of male heirs to his young niece Victoria. Now, by the ancient Salic Law of German States, no woman was allowed to rule in Hanover. That country, therefore, held since the days of George I under the same Crown as England, now severed all connection with this island; and with that severance our most immediate point of contact with the affairs of Europe was automatically broken. Our interests beyond the Channel were no longer territorial; we were free henceforward to plough a lonely furrow, and to pursue our chosen course without hindrance or restraint. Yet, unhampered though it might be by direct material ties, our foreign policy was by no means one of selfish isolation. Even before the accession of Victoria the Whig statesmen suffered from no narrowness of outlook, least of all their Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston. Palmerston, after Canning, was our greatest Foreign Minister of the century. Canning's keen insight and sparkling originality he could not perhaps equal; but for sheer brute strength of will power few could touch him. To the outward eye, a hearty, genial, popular, and

somewhat flippant gentleman, much at home in the drawing-rooms or the clubs of fashionable society, and playing, characteristically enough, "a bold flukey hand at billiards," he yet could throw into the business of his office more force and energy than ten ordinary men. Fearless to the utmost limits of audacity and incorrigibly rash, he cared not a fig for any soul alive. He would send off dispatches of the most tremendous import without the leave or knowledge of his chief; he would speak his mind straight out to foreign statesmen till they knew not whether to dislike or fear him most; while every one was saying that a thing could not be done, Palmerston went and did it; and, with an almost uncanny succession of good fortune, the sequel always proved him in the right. His policy made Britain, as he intended that it should, the most powerful influence in Europe, the champion (armed if need be) in the cause of liberty and justice, and the pacific arbiter in many a hot dispute. He came at an apt moment. Europe was still in a deplorable condition. The yeast of revolution had not yet ceased working, nor the reactionary despots trying to batter it down. Palmerston was determined to bring order out of this chaos and to allow the continental democrats at least fair play. In this endeavour he was greatly aided by the recent development in France. There the members of the restored Bourbon dynasty—Louis XVIII till 1824 and Charles X thenceforward—had foolishly outstripped the bounds of the people's patience. Not content with reinforcing the despotic rule of King Ferdinand at Madrid, they had pursued a similar policy at home. Step by step the work of the Revolution had been sedulously undone. The laws had been remodelled; the royalist nobles reinstalled. The Catholic Church restored to something of its old authority; the freedom of the Press curtailed. In 1830 Paris rose; the streets were barricaded; Charles X was conducted to the coast; and the tricolour was hoisted at the Hôtel de Ville. Louis Philippe, a prince of the blood royal, but a man of wide experience and democratic sympathies, was set on the vacant throne. Thus, once

again within a generation, France had stood out for liberty, and had blown into thin air the principles laid down by the conservative Congress of Vienna. Metternich and his friends were nervous and annoyed, but impotent to act; and, with the best grace that they could muster, the Powers had accepted the accomplished fact. For England, however, it was different. Even the Tories had smiled on the event; and to the new Whig Ministry the return of France to democratic ways was particularly welcome. So before long the old fox Talleyrand, now a man of seventy-six, "pale as a corpse and frightfully wrinkled," but still, as ever, on the winning side, was engaged in helping Palmerston to uphold the cause of liberty, and to undo some portion of the very work which not twenty years before he himself had watched doing at Vienna.

Chief perhaps among the failures of that Congress had been the union forcibly imposed upon the Dutch and Belgian States. Between these two peoples there had long existed a violent antipathy. The Belgians resented bitterly their subordination to the King of Holland. Their national pride rebelled against the effort to supplant their native language by the Dutch. Their Catholic sentiments, though toleration had been granted, were outraged by subjection to a Protestant régime. In 1830 they, too, had played their stroke. They had flung out the Dutch soldiery from Brussels and declared themselves thenceforward an independent State. Looking for allies at this crisis of their destiny, they had found a ready listener in the new "People's King" of France. Louis Philippe had backed them, naturally eager to support a cause so nearly related to his own, and at the same time anxious to win back under French influence this vital border-state. He had even at one time lent ear to the proposal that his own son, the Duc de Nemours, should fill the Belgian throne; and, as the Dutch were still intransigent and refused to yield their claims, he in his turn looked round him for an ally to assist his policy. An appeal was made to England; and England did not fail. Palmerston, like Canning, believed in the

national ideal ; and, seeing how closely our own interests were concerned in this neighbouring seaboard State, he resolved that Belgium should henceforth be independent in fact as well as name. He would not hear of a French candidate for the vacant Belgian throne ; and with characteristic courage he put his foot down firmly on the project. Louis Philippe yielded ; and, this done, the two proceeded to enforce a peaceful settlement. The first step was to recover Antwerp, which the Dutch had seized ; and hither a French army was dispatched, while a British fleet sailed up the River Scheldt. Antwerp fell ; the Belgian soil was freed ; and it now remained to guarantee its safety for the future. The negotiations were exceedingly prolonged ; but at length in 1839 a historic treaty was drawn up in London whereby Belgium was established as a free and neutral State in perpetuity—neutral towards others, and as such no less to be observed by them. The treaty received the signature of all the Powers, and among them the signatures of Austria and of Prussia. Thus Palmerston's diplomacy had helped to break the back of the continental conspiracy against the liberty of peoples. He had intervened to uphold the rights of nationality which others had intervened so frequently to crush ; and the neutrality of Belgium remained the lasting monument of his successful handiwork, until the day when seventy-five years later the Central Powers again conspired to violate those frontiers and to tear up the "scrap of paper" which had received their solemn signature in 1839.

The "Entente Cordiale," which throughout the Belgian crisis had held ourselves and France so well at one, was soon to be subjected, as events will show, to a much more searching test. Palmerston, according to his habit, proceeded on his way, prancing and triumphant, like a high-mettled horse, and utterly regardless on whose feelings he might trample. He took up the people's cause in both Portugal and Spain, supporting the two popular queen heirs against their two despotic uncles, Don Miguel and Don Carlos, sending out a British admiral to beat the

former off Cape St. Vincent, and allowing a number of British officers to enlist as volunteers against the latter. In either case events proved Palmerston as usual to have backed not merely the more righteous, but the winning cause. Meanwhile, however, a cloud was rising in the Middle East which gave more serious trouble. The Turkish Empire was then, as ever since, in a frail and tottering condition. Russia was watching with a jealous eye its approaching dissolution, and was ready to step in at any moment as heir to the "Sick Man's" coveted dominions. To such aggrandizement of Russian power Palmerston, however, was stubbornly opposed. He maintained that with careful nursing the "Sick Man" might recover, and, so far as English backing could secure it, he was resolved to keep the Turkish Empire whole. In 1840 the call arrived for action. Mehemet Ali, the semi-independent viceroy of the Mussulmans in Egypt, had rebelled against the Sultan, his nominal chief. He had laid hands on Syria, defeated a Turkish army sent against him, and was now even threatening to march westwards against Constantinople itself. Palmerston did not hesitate. A naval force was hurried to the Syrian coast. Acre was bombarded with our guns, and taken; and Mehemet Ali was compelled to sue for terms. All this, however, was done in the teeth of most violent opposition from the French. Bitter jealousies existed over the fate of the Levant, and France, who coveted Egypt for herself, was seriously alarmed lest we should get our foot in first. Louis Philippe threatened war, and talked bombastically of "unmuzzling the tiger." Palmerston laughed, and, though his nervous friends besought him to be careful, took no notice of the threat; and once again his confidence was justified. The French talk proved empty bluff. They sullenly watched us bolster up the Turkish power without so much as stirring a finger; and the next time that the "Sick Man" needed the assistance of his friends in Western Europe, Palmerston was able to send a British army to the Crimea with Frenchmen marching at its side.

The affair of Mehemet Ali rang down the curtain, for a

time at least, on Palmerston's activities ; for within six months of it the Whig Ministry was out. Since the days of the Reform Bill their popularity had been slowly on the wane. The bright hopes of better things, which the grand experiment had raised, went unfulfilled ; and the Whig Ministers themselves, as though exhausted by the effort, had lost touch with the national demand. Yet for all that these years were not entirely barren. Something at least had been done for the betterment of England ; and two measures in particular stand out. First had been undertaken a reform of the old Poor Law, an antiquated, much mismanaged system, a relic of far-off Elizabethan days. The provision then made for the relief (out of the rates) of the sick and needy and "unemployable" had in recent years been notoriously abused. Wherever workmen's wages were too low to support life, it had become the common practice to allow them also relief out of the rates, supplementing their pittance by a weekly dole. The result was that the farmers, knowing this, had deliberately abstained from raising wages ; and the number of paupers, dependent upon charity, had steadily increased, until a large proportion of the able-bodied workers had come (as the phrase goes) "on the parish." This scandalous system the Whigs ended once for all. They restricted the payment of such charitable doles to genuine cases of incapacity or sickness. For the able-bodied who could obviously work, but for one reason or another did not do so, they established a new remedy—the workhouse,¹ where board and lodging were provided gratis in return for the compulsory performance of some menial task. In every district the parishes combined to erect a "Union" house ; and, since it was a part of the Governmental scheme to deter the able-bodied from recourse to such assistance, special care was taken to render these institutions as uncomfortable and disagreeable as might be. Herded together in unwholesome, squalid quarters,

¹ To be strictly accurate, local authorities had here and there provided workhouses as early as the seventeenth century ; but towards the end of the eighteenth their use had been confined to provision for the aged and infirm.

fed on a diet that was only fit for pigs, bullied by the beadle and despised by all, the miserable inmates were there intended to appreciate the error of their ways and to see how great were the advantages of a life of honest toil. Such being their intention, there is no doubt the authorities succeeded. Few entered a workhouse who could by any means keep out of it, and those who did were generally the victims of some cruel and inevitable fate—workmen thrown out of employment and through no fault of their own compelled to tramp the roads, orphans, like Oliver Twist, cast homeless on the world, aged folk whom the grudging weekly pittance, still paid to the incapable out of the parish rates, was altogether insufficient to maintain. The Poor Law of the Whigs may have marked some real improvement on the bad system of the past; it may have been a necessary step of slow transition to a time when the problems of poverty would be better understood; but, whatever else the reform may have accomplished, it did nothing to endear its authors to the hearts of the English poor.

Nor was the other measure which was passed during these years any genuine solution of the prevailing discontents. The Act which reorganized the self-government in towns was in itself a useful piece of legislation. The "Corporations," which had come in mediæval times and onwards to control the management of local politics, were in the main self-constituted bodies. In the majority of townships a ring of leading tradesmen—heirs by descent of the powerful Merchant Guilds of long ago—kept all in their own hands, filled up their number at their own discretion, and administered affairs to their own personal advantage. Their sessions were held in secret; they were answerable to none for anything they did; they spent the ratepayer's money without asking his approval; and, after the corrupt fashion of the day, themselves absorbed a goodly portion of the public funds. Such a state of affairs was scarcely to be tolerated by a party which had recently applied the principle of self-government to Parliament; and

it stands to their credit that the Whigs brought it to an end. By the so-called "Corporation Act" of 1835 they made the future governors of towns responsible to the citizens themselves. The town councillors henceforward were compelled to seek election at stated intervals. The mayor, chosen from their own number by the members of the council, was thus also indirectly dependent on the ratepayers' support. In a word, the whole policy of local administration was now to be controlled, not by a small minority of selfish individuals, but by the public at large. This was of great and manifest importance at a time when the towns were every year becoming larger. By-laws were needed to regulate all manner of new details. Schemes for lighting or for sanitation were soon to be more seriously considered; and it was to the mayor and corporation that the towns now looked for the manifold improvements they so sorely needed. If therefore there was still much discreditable slackness or, what is worse, much actual dishonesty and graft, the citizens at least held the method of redress in their own hands. They could punish inefficiency by refusing re-election. Nevertheless the public were very slow to use their power; few took the trouble to exercise their municipal vote; nor must we imagine that in a half-educated country even the most complete self-government could ever do much good. The "Corporation Act" meant little to the masses. It did not clothe the naked body or fill the hungry mouth; the poor were just as wretched as they were before. The fact is that, the Whig Ministry having been raised to power by middle class support, their legislation was from first to last a middle class affair. Middle class guardians administered the Poor Law; and middle class town councillors enjoyed the privilege of ordering the lower class about. That was what Whig Reform had meant in practice; and it is little wonder that the nation as a whole was disappointed. In dealing with the real distress of the majority the Whigs had lamentably failed.

Their failure was only rendered the more tragic by other

evidence they gave that they at any rate meant well. One splendid act of genuine enlightenment was carried in these years, one which, however, had no immediate bearing on these problems at our door—the emancipation of the negro slave. Already before the end of the previous century the compassion of Englishmen had been stirred by the pleading of Wilberforce and others. In 1807 a law had been passed against the Slave Trade, and the traffic in kidnapped natives from the western coast of Africa had practically stopped. Nevertheless in the West Indian plantations multitudes of miserable creatures were still working under the lash ; and our colonials were not unnaturally reluctant to forego the obvious advantages of their cheap labour. No little friction therefore was experienced in this quarter, when the liberation of the negroes was proposed. The Whigs, however, were not to be denied. They voted a huge sum of twenty million pounds to compensate the owners, and ordered that the slaves should be set free. Thus by an act of real self-sacrifice England's fair name for liberty was signally upheld, and a great question solved in our West Indian possessions, which the United States upon the mainland did not even dare to face for another quarter of a century, and then decided only after four years of civil war. Yet, while so much was being done for these black slaves overseas, little was thought and still less said about the white industrial drudges here at home. The Whigs, whatever their virtues, were more theorists and philosophers than true philanthropists. Their heads were so full of lofty sentiments about the Rights of Man that they could spare no thought for the women and young children who were toiling for intolerable hours, by night as well as day, in the mines and cotton mills of Lancashire and Yorkshire. Scandals and abuses then went on of which the bare recountal would now shock us beyond words, but which in those days were regarded as a mere matter of due course. The public conscience was not yet properly awakened ; and the statesmen, who were no more callous than the rest of their contemporaries, simply thought in terms of politics and

not in terms of life. When starving men were asking them for bread, they talked big about the Vote ; and after a brief period of encouragement men's hopes of Whig idealism died down again. The Reform Bill had done nothing for their miseries. Instead of a governing class of landed gentlemen, it had given them a governing class of manufacturers and landed gentlemen combined. That was all ; and in the moment of their bitter disillusionment the last state seemed perhaps almost worse than the first.

CHAPTER V

THE WORKERS ORGANIZE

"THIS is certainly the happiest country in the world," said some sarcastic person at the time of the Whigs' fall, "for nobody wants anything;" and there was a grim truth behind the saying. Nobody appeared to want anything, for the very simple reason that nobody could afford it. There was no demand for labour, because industry was slack; industry was slack, because there was no demand for goods; and once again there was no demand for goods, because, when men are out of work, they get no wage. Caught in that vicious circle of stagnation, the country was heading straight for ruin. Things went from bad to worse. The year 1842 was a record year for pauperism and crime—this after a decade of Whig administration; and already the people had begun to realize that neither party in the House of Commons was likely to do anything for them. *There was nothing for it therefore but to do something for themselves.* Yet there were immense obstacles across their path; and of these the worst beyond a doubt was lack of education. The mass of the labouring class were quite unlettered; and they had little opportunity to learn. There was no national system of elementary schools, no law compelling children to attend what schools there were. So millions of men could neither read nor write; and for such to organize effectively was well-nigh impossible. Whatever efforts were made in that direction were therefore half-crippled at the start by blank ignorance and all the short-sightedness and folly which

usually attend it. Nevertheless there were not wanting leaders, if the mass would follow. There were men—middle-class enthusiasts for the most part, but sometimes even of the working-class itself—who had been roused to thought by the miseries around them, and who since the beginning of the century had stood out as preachers of revolutionary gospels or as spokesmen of the popular demands. The great national upheaval which had occurred in neighbouring France had exercised a profound influence upon such thinkers. Some had even studied the treatises of Rousseau, and preached in their turn the doctrine of Liberty, Equality, and the Brotherhood of man. Among these, Tom Paine, the tobacconist philosopher, was perhaps the most notorious. The publication of his book "The Rights of Man" had filled the authorities with wild alarm. The book had been laid under a ban; men were actually transported for the crime of selling it; and Paine himself was forced to flee the country. He went to Paris and served in the Convention under Robespierre, fell into disfavour and was put in prison, finally in 1802 left France for North America, where he subsequently died, a victim, so his enemies declared, to the kindred vices of atheism and drink. Yet Paine's example fired other rebel spirits. Pamphlets were written to spread their dangerous views, and despite the vigilance of the police were circulated widely. Wild schemes were spun for wholesale Socialist reform, the abolition of all private property, and the levelling of all classes to an equal plane. Secret societies were formed in towns where men read revolutionary essays and vowed with clenched fists to take vengeance for their wrongs. A few more practically minded than the rest attempted to make some small beginnings of reform by experiments of their own. One such was Robert Owen, the famous philanthropist of Lanark on the Clyde. He had risen from the humble post of a draper's shop assistant to be manager and part-owner of a mill. The opportunity was thus afforded him of putting his ideals into practice. He made a careful study of the life of the mill-hands, and attempted

in whatever way he could to render it more human. He cut down the hours of work to reasonable limits, established a school for the use of his employees, and set up a shop where they could purchase goods on the co-operative plan.¹ The experiment was an astonishing success. The model factory at Lanark was soon famous the world over. Visitors came from all parts to inspect it; and, when in America men talked of founding a Socialistic settlement, Owen was consulted about drawing up the rules. At a time when most employers thought only of their pockets, this man's example stood out as a reminder that they had other responsibilities than to make money and grow rich. The lesson was neglected. Manufacturers did not hold with the ideas of Robert Owen, but preferred to continue in their old oppressive ways. But to the working class themselves Robert Owen was a hero. His name became a household word among the poor and the downtrodden. The beneficence that he practised and the theories that he preached shone like a beacon-light amid the gloom of their despair. Owen himself died in poverty; but the ideals which he had given to the world lived on.

Yet such philanthropic effort, however heroic and sincere, could not carry the world far. What in reality was needed, if the position of the working man was at all to be improved, was an effort on the part of the working man himself. Nor even so could he hope for much success unless he organized. Individuals alone, working one here, one there, were powerless; but, if all alike combined, there would be no resisting the sheer dead weight of numbers. So the first and essential step was to get men to act together. But here a difficulty arose. At the end of the last century a law had been set

¹ Owen has good claim to be regarded as the founder of the "Co-operative Store." The purpose of the system, which has since had a great vogue, is to do without the services of the middleman retailer, and so save his gains for the pockets of the poor. The plan of a Co-operative Society is to run a shop for the use of its own members and then at the end of the year to divide up the profits of the sales among them. Since Owen's day the movement has grown enormously, until now a large proportion of the retail business of the country is in the hands of Co-operative Stores.

up forbidding all "combination" among workmen; and, during the period of the great wars and after, the formation of working-class societies or (as we should say) Trades Unions had been treated as seditious. Before, therefore, any progress could be made at all, it had been necessary to secure the repeal of this ban on "combination." The man who undertook to see it done, and who by dint of sheer vigour and persistency succeeded, was an obscure individual of the name of Francis Place. Place was a child of the people, originally a breeches maker in another man's employ; but he had worked and saved, and eventually himself became a master. This good fortune, however, did not cause him to forget the miseries of the less fortunate. He spent long hours in thought over projects of reform. He compiled a huge mass of evidence concerning the injustice done to individual workers; and above all he read. The ideas of Adam Smith took a firm hold upon his mind; but he applied them in a new and original direction. If competition and freedom from restrictions was considered good for the masters, it was equally, he argued, good for the men. Employers should not have everything their own way; and it was only fair that their employees also should be at liberty to drive their bargain about wages; it was obvious, however, that in driving such a bargain the individual workman could do but little good, unless he were permitted to make common cause with others. So on the ground of Free Trade principles alone, if not on any other, Place was resolved that the ban on combination must be taken off; and by such arguments as these he was able to win round some politicians to his views. His opportunity came when Canning and Huskisson took office. Free Trade was in the air. A more generous attitude of mind prevailed in Parliament; and, when in 1824 a Bill was introduced by Place's friends for the Combination Act's repeal, it was passed with scarcely a demur. It was not long, however, before members came to realize what dangerous liberty this gave the working class; and in 1825 a determined move was made to take back what had been given. But it was

now too late: the triumph of Place's cause was not radically shaken and, although some hampering conditions were laid down, combination between workmen was henceforth allowed under the law. The career of Trades Unionism had in fact begun. At first, as perhaps was natural, the men were slow to use their new-won liberty. They did not attempt to unite on an extensive scale, but were content to form small local groups in single factories or single towns, with the result that they could make little headway in the fight with their employers. The futility of such disunited action was, however, soon apparent; and about the time of the Reform Bill they struck out a bolder line. Several Unions were now launched which were intended to embrace, not the men of one locality alone, but those engaged upon some special craft in whatever part of England. There was a Builders' Union and a Cotton Spinners' Union and a host of various others; but the existence of these bodies was at best precarious; their membership was very limited, their progress painfully slow. The fact was that, under the conditions laid down by Parliament in 1825, Trades Unionism had been robbed of half its strength. Though permitted to debate about their policy or to drive a collective bargain with their masters, the men were definitely prohibited from coming out on strike or from taking any action whatsoever to enforce their claims. Small wonder, therefore, that they soon despaired of progress in this particular direction, or that, long before the fall of the Whig Ministry, their effort had begun to take a different trend. For a new idea was stirring. The very Reform Bill, which had given them results so far below their hope, had none the less pointed them the way. They must have a new Reform Bill, and a Reform Bill under which the working class would be included. In other words, the magic of the vote had caught hold upon their fancy; and they felt that, if their troubles were to find a swift solution, it was political power and political power alone which could provide the key.

The great working-class crusade for political reform

which we call the Chartist Movement had its origin in various sources and drew into its stream, as time went on, many different groups of men. The whole of England was in a disturbed and restive state. The new Poor Law, to begin with, had served only to aggravate the problems which it did not try to solve. It took the weekly dole from thousands of ill-paid workers and yet put nothing in its place. All they now had was the starvation wage, which the hard-hearted employer showed no inclination to augment; yet most men much preferred to starve rather than to accept the grim alternative of the workhouse. They suffered terribly; but it was not like Englishmen to suffer long in silence. An agitation was begun, and not without success, to delay the enforcement of the law. From the North country in particular, now and henceforward to be the storm-centre of industrial discontent, there went up a shout of anger. Societies were formed for protest and resistance. Torchlight meetings were convened when the day's work was over, and inflammatory speeches delivered to huge crowds. The chief spokesman and figurehead of this northern agitation was a loud-mouthed, impetuous, voluble Irish giant of the name of Feargus O'Connor. Part of O'Connor's influence depended on the growing popularity of the "Northern Star," a newspaper of which he was the editor; but his true element was the platform. There face to face with an excited crowd he could give full rein to his wild imagination, rousing the fiercest passions by his roaring rhetoric, sparing no one, checking at nothing, never stopping to think, and ready, if need be, to use his Irish fists on anyone who dared to disagree with him. O'Connor's avowed policy was revolution; class warfare his unfailing remedy for the troubles of the poor. But happily there were some among the working class themselves who disagreed with him. In Birmingham, for instance, there was a strong association of moderate-minded men, who preferred pacific methods to an appeal to naked force. The most effective opposition to O'Connor's violence came, however, from the capital itself. The London Working Men's Association was a more sane

and educated body than was to be found elsewhere in England; and its leader, William Lovett, was a man of a very different type from the wild prophet of the North. A tall, spare, gentlemanly figure, with a quiet determined manner, melancholy eyes, and feeble health, Lovett had more about him of the thinker than the demagogue. Under his influence the London group did a deal of solid spadework. They issued a scathing pamphlet on the "Rotten House of Commons;" and, not content with this, proceeded further to draw up proposals for reform. The result was the famous document which they called the "People's Charter;" and the proposals it contained were briefly these: first, that every man in England should receive the vote; second, that voting should take place by secret ballot; third, that any person, whatever his degree,¹ should be eligible to stand for Parliament; fourth, that the members should be paid a salary; fifth, that a new election should be held in every year; and sixth, that all constituencies should be made of equal size. In short, these Six Points meant nothing more or less than out-and-out democracy and the surrender of the power of Parliament into the hands of the People. In 1838, when it was first drawn up, it was the dream of a few visionary enthusiasts (though a dream which for the most part has since that day come true). It drew cold, contemptuous laughter from the superior, level-headed, comfortable classes; but even its humble authors can scarcely have been prepared for the immense enthusiasm it aroused among the mass. Within a few months all other projects had been cast aside. The Poor Law itself was half-forgotten; and every hope now centred on the "Chartist" cause. It was arranged to circulate a national petition demanding that the Charter should be put in force, and in every corner of the kingdom the workers flocked to sign it. Meanwhile in London preparations were on foot to convene a "People's Parliament." Delegates were sent from various working-

¹ By an Act passed in 1711 membership of the House of Commons had been restricted to men who were possessed of considerable property.

class associations; early in the spring of '39 some fifty representatives met together at a hotel in Cockspur Street near Charing Cross, to discuss what policy should be pursued if the Petition were rejected. Seldom in history was there seen a crazier session. The delegates of this wonderful "Convention," as they called it, had a most exaggerated notion of their own importance; they even wrote the letters M.C. after their names in imitation of Parliamentary members. But rules of procedure were totally ignored. Problems were discussed which they could not by any possibility control. They wrangled and formed factions, like a party of raw boys, some following the lead of the patient practical Lovett, some preferring the more rough-and-ready methods of the reckless firebrand of the "Northern Star." After this manner three mortal months were spent in idle vapouring. But the cause made little progress; the number of signatures given to the Petition fell far short of first hopes; the delegates themselves were tired of talking and felt something must be *done*. The moment could scarcely have been more favourable to a policy of violence. The bad harvest of the previous autumn was making itself felt; and the thin, drawn faces of the famished multitudes began to wear an uglier look. "Better to perish by the sword than starve" was the thought now uppermost. In the middle of May the Convention moved from the capital to Birmingham, there to mature its plans in greater security from interference. Their scheme now was that, at the moment when the Petition was presented, the Government should be cowed into surrender by a grand display of force, possibly a general strike, but, if need be, something worse. Guns were everywhere in readiness. Manifestoes were issued calling for the "Tyrants' Blood;" in some places barricades were actually set up. But the Chartists had reckoned without the Government itself; and the Government, too, was ready. Sir Charles Napier had been put in command over the northern district, and had distributed his troops with admirable discretion. Thousands of the middle class had been sworn in as special constables. The police force, though

pitifully inadequate, was on the alert. At the beginning of July there was a raid on a mass meeting held in Birmingham and several arrests were made. Lovett was taken up on a charge of seditious libel. But still the grand display of force hung fire. A week later Thomas Attwood, a Birmingham banker, Chartist leader, and member for the borough, brought forward a motion in the House of Commons that the Petition should be heard. The motion was thrown out by 235 votes to 46. Volumes of windy threats had been poured out in the Convention about the measures to be taken, if such a thing were done. Yet, now that it was done, days passed and nothing happened. The truth became apparent. The Chartists had begun to lose their nerve. The more, in fact, they thought about an insurrection, the less they liked the look of the adventure; and soon they were actually discussing the advisability of "winning round" the middle class! Meanwhile, as the courage of the Chartists cooled, the Government was adroit enough to follow up its momentary advantage. Crowds were dispersed by soldiery, and not without much bloodshed. Search was made for firearms. Suspects were arrested, and imprisoned or transported. Lovett was committed for a year to jail. O'Connor suffered a like fate. In a brief while, the back of the whole movement had been broken. Indecision, divided counsels, and a total miscalculation of the force opposed to them had left the Chartists impotent and foolish at the hour of the great test. Instead of closing up their ranks, they fell more and more a prey to jealous faction; and at the end of August the Convention ceased to be. The great cause had missed its tide.

But, though the fires of Chartism were burning low, the embers smouldered on, to break out again and again during the Forties into bursts of fitful life. For the misery of the people did not allow them to forget; and, when in due course both Lovett and O'Connor were released from prison, the work of reorganization was begun. The discouragements of previous years had induced a calmer spirit. There was less talk now about recourse to open violence; but a

renewed attempt was made to drive the Six Points home. In 1842 a second Petition was got up, containing or purporting to contain over three million names. It was carried in procession to the House of Commons. A one-sided debate followed. The Petition was talked down by the eloquent Macaulay and other clever speakers; and the affair concluded, as on the first occasion, with an enormous hostile vote. This blow, however, was by no means the most deadly which befell the Chartist cause. For the rift within its ranks was growing wider; and the real struggle of these latter years was not so much a struggle against enemies without as a contest for the leadership within. O'Connor now came out in his true colours; he was really a self-seeker first and last, and, whether or no he made financial profit out of the movement's funds, there can be no sort of question that he was mainly aiming at power. His jealous nature aspired to a unique personal ascendancy and could "bear, like the Turk, no rival near the throne." He announced with astonishing effrontery that he alone had remained faithful to true Chartist principles, that he had all along opposed recourse to violence, that he was the sole saviour of a shaken cause. On Lovett he delivered a series of mean, unscrupulous attacks; and, carrying the fickle mob along with him, left the patient, persevering Londoner almost without a following. Lovett was prepared to watch and wait and educate the masses. O'Connor was compelled to hurry blindly on because upon such tactics his own popularity depended. To revive the flagging interest of his dispirited supporters, he presently evolved a brand-new scheme for settling back the people on the land. So the demand for three acres and a cabbage patch was added as a sort of postscript to the cardinal Six Points; and a Joint-Stock Company was actually floated for buying up small holdings for the poor. But the climax in the career of both the Chartists and O'Connor was reached in the year of '48. That year was a landmark in the development of Europe. Revolution was in the air. France once again emerged as a Republic. The German populace

seemed for the moment to have their rulers by the throat ; and the noise of all these doings naturally found an echo on this side the Channel too. Some of the continental revolutionaries came over ; and, fired with the idea of an international alliance among workers, the Chartist leaders resolved on a last throw. Once again a Petition was prepared, signed, the "Northern Star" asserted, by a full six million names. Its supporters were enjoined to collect on 10 April at Kennington Common, then an open stretch of grass. Half a million were expected ; but, on the day, not a twentieth part of such a number came. The military were watching ; the Duke of Wellington, now a veteran of eighty, was given the command ; and with characteristic caution he kept his troops in perfect readiness, but out of sight. Nearly two hundred thousand special constables had been enrolled. Speeches were delivered to the assembled crowd ; and the crowd listened without emotion under a pouring rain. O'Connor, pale and nervous, drove off to Westminster. The Great Petition followed in three cabs. This curious document (found upon inspection to contain far less than three million signatures and of these a large proportion apparently forged) was in bulk at any rate a formidable object. Unfolded, it would have stretched for several miles in length. When it reached the House of Commons and was ushered in, it was greeted with loud laughter and derisive cheers. That laugh was a measure of the Petition's real importance. O'Connor's crowning effort had proved the worst fiasco of them all ; and Chartism had shot its final bolt. From a living movement it had fallen as dead as Queen Anne.

The real cause of the Chartists' failure was that they did not know their own minds. Among the banners which they carried in procession was one inscribed with the words "God save the Queen" and underneath the comment "For nobody else will ;" and that contradiction was typical of their whole attitude. They wanted to be loyal and disloyal at one and the same time ; like Macbeth, they would not play false, and yet would wrongly win. Though they never

really wanted revolution, they pretended that they did, aspiring to effect constitutional ideals by unconstitutional means. Instinct forbade them to push matters to extremes; but the infectious violence of O'Connor had a fatal fascination for uneducated minds to which the cool common-sense of Lovett could make no permanent appeal. Yet, though immediate failure was the outcome of a weakness which the mass of working men had still to overcome, Chartism brought qualities to light in them which were a certain pledge of their ultimate success. The moderation which refused the choice of revolution stood out in admirable contrast to the feverish excesses of continental folk; and, though advance might be sadly slow in coming, yet such patience was an earnest that, when it came, it would all the more be sure. Nor, on the whole, had the leaders of the movement been false to the great tradition which has made the English people the pioneers of freedom. Though incapable of effective organization, they had been lacking in neither vision nor ideals. What they failed at the moment to achieve by threats, they ultimately won through the sincerity and justice of their cause. For the governing class, while defying all weapons of intimidation, was not deaf to the argument of reason. The lessons of Chartism had sunk in; and one by one the Chartist principles were almost without exception endorsed by Parliament itself. Vote by ballot came within a generation; salaries for members within two; and finally the vote has now been granted, not merely to all Englishmen, but to their wives and sisters as well. The twilight of the Chartists' agitation was merely a prelude to a dawn they never saw.

CHAPTER VI

PEEL AND THE CORN LAWS

THE collapse of the great Chartist movement in 1848 was accepted with more or less indifference by the mass of the working class ; and if, as such indifference seems to prove, they had ceased to be interested in political reform, the explanation is not far to seek. For the worst of their sufferings had already been relieved in a different but more effective fashion ; and the odd thing was that this relief had come not from a Whig but from a Tory Ministry. At the General Election of 1841 the party which had opposed the great Reform Bill was returned to power by an electorate thoroughly disgusted with the bungling of the party which had passed it. With a solid majority of eighty-one the Tories entered office ; and the man who was to carry England forward over the next great step of her political development was the old associate of Huskisson and Canning, called now to become the new Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel. Some understanding of Peel's character and history is essential to an understanding of what he now achieved. He was not by birth an aristocrat proper ; but the son of a prosperous northern manufacturer. His father, however, had aspired from early days to see him Prime Minister of England ; and he had been sent to school at Harrow, where he eclipsed even the brilliance of his school-fellow Lord Byron ; then to Oxford, where he had established a new record by taking a "Double First."¹ But, though his superb ability coupled with a genius for hard

¹ First-class honours, that is, in Classics and Mathematics.

work had soon won him a place within the Tory Cabinet, Peel's nature did not easily assimilate with the company he found there. He never wholly shook off the influence of his middle-class upbringing. It seems almost as though he was secretly ashamed of not being "quite a gentleman." His manner was awkward and reserved, and so shy that the young Queen declared it made her feel shy herself; "she would have liked Mr. Peel much better if he would only keep his legs still." This brusque uneasy manner and a natural reticence of temper, too, led to some lack of sympathy between Sir Robert and his more consciously thoroughbred colleagues; and no doubt, as time went on, it helped to pave the way for their eventual breach. Far more important than all this, however, the accident of Peel's commercial parentage gave him a different outlook upon life from the normal Tory politician. The ingrained bigotry of their most cherished principles had never taken full hold upon his mind. He could look squarely and fairly at the facts before him; and, if his reason told him that his policy was wrong, he at least had the honesty to abandon old convictions and the strength to shake free from the trammels of a party prejudice. This quality in Peel was in fact his greatest strength. Men might hate, but they could never despise his deep sincerity of purpose. His very oratory had in it nothing designed for mere effect; it aimed at proving "not that he was eloquent, but simply that he was right;" and in the things that mattered most when he became the Tory Premier, it is beyond a doubt he was.

The moment at which Peel had entered office was fraught with the gravest peril of national disaster. The opening months of 1842 marked, as we have said, perhaps the lowest depth of misery and want. The proletariat was slowly starving. Industry was at a standstill. In one north-country city two-thirds of the factories were closed. Others were little better; and while the population steadily increased, our trade was dwindling like a summer stream. One remedy was obvious. The customs duties levied upon imports, though much reduced by Huskisson some twenty

years before, were still excessive and still acted as a clog. The manufacturers who wanted raw materials, could not afford the price with the duty added to it. The straightforward method of reviving trade seemed therefore to take off the customs duties; but this was less easy than it sounds. On the income from such duties the Government's revenue depended; and already the revenue was sadly in arrears. In 1841 the deficit was five millions; in 1842 it was seven and a half. Under such circumstances to cut off the most valuable source of revenue seemed a suicidal policy; and there appeared to be no solution to this crux. There was a solution, however, which to ourselves is evident. Then, it was evident to but a very few—the Free Trade theorists who followed Adam Smith. Their answer to the problem was as follows: "Reduce the customs duties, and mark the inevitable result. Trade will once more revive. Imports will flow in. Industry will flourish and the country become rich. *Such taxes as remain will bring in as much again as the taxes you remove, simply because, as the volume of imported goods increases, the takings at the customs also will increase in like proportion.*" This argument, however, required an act of faith. The promised benefits of its adoption would not be felt at once; and it might well be doubted whether any Government had the pluck to take the plunge. Even the Whigs, despite their close connection with the merchant class, had not thought fit to take it. The Tories by habit of a long tradition were pledged to the principle of protecting our home industries and believed in taxing imports to keep foreign rivals out. (But Whig or Tory, it mattered little now, when the country seemed threatened with sure financial ruin; and all eyes looked to Peel as the only man who had the power to save it.)

Now Peel had a habit, as we have said above, of looking hard facts in the face. But more than that he was a great financier; and it was not for nothing that he had served alongside Huskisson in years gone by. He prepared to make the plunge. In his budget speech of 1842 he took a firm line upon the reduction of import duties—"not more

than 5 per cent on raw materials, not more than twenty on manufactured goods ;” and he was as good as his word. In fact he went one better, and within the next few years took off the tax on wool, lard, hides, and some other raw materials altogether. Nothing but good resulted. Industry revived. Trade poured into England ; and, as he had expected, the actual loss to revenue was barely a quarter of a million pounds. Peel, however, was not the man to stake all on expectations. He had therefore cautiously provided, in case the total takings from custom dues should drop, a supplementary source of revenue. A tax on income had hitherto been levied only under the necessities of war ; but Peel fell back upon this unpopular expedient in a time of complete peace. A tax of $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound was taken from all incomes above £150. At first it was intended for a term of three years only ; but the prosperity resulting from his other measures was by then so abundantly displayed, that he felt no qualms about continuing a burden which the richer class could so well afford to pay ; and in point of fact the Income Tax has never since been dropped. Thus fortified, his bold financial policy went on from strength to strength ; and by 1845, so far from showing a deficit on the yearly budget, Peel actually found himself in the fortunate position of being able to pay off part of the great national debt.

There is one tax, however, of which up to this point no mention has been made—the import duty upon corn. This tax, which had been imposed in 1815 to provide protective stimulus to agriculture, still stood as Huskisson had left it on the more equitable basis of the “sliding-scale.” But, despite this alteration, its effect was, as before, to maintain the price of corn at an artificial level ; and this, while it meant a good chance of high profits for the farmer and a certainty of high rents for the landlord, meant for the poor man bread at a cruelly exorbitant rate and never very much of it at that. The home-grown supply was quite inadequate to meet the needs of a rapidly increasing population ; and, except in famine years when the price topped 73s. a

quarter, not a grain of foreign corn was allowed to enter the country. Now, though Peel had introduced some further changes in the sliding-scale, he had made as yet no effort whatever to remove the incubus itself; and his excuse for leaving it was the old familiar plea so often urged by its authors and supporters. The agricultural class, they argued, is the backbone of the nation; and to maintain it in prosperity is the plain duty of a prudent Government, not merely because a plentiful supply of home-grown food is a source of strength in peace, but even more because it is the sole guarantee of national security in time of war. But there was more behind Peel's attitude than meets the eye. As leader of a Tory Ministry, he numbered among the ranks of his supporters an overwhelming proportion of the landlord class; and no amount of skilful argument could cloak the awkward fact that the landlord politicians were a very selfish set. No doubt they echoed the plea set forth above in all sincerity; but the fact remained that the Corn Laws did put money into their pocket and that their pocket, as perhaps with all of us, was their most tender spot. Even at this date Peel may have realized that sooner or later the Corn Laws too must go; but he was not yet prepared to alienate his party, and for a while at least he was content to leave the Corn Laws as they were.

Others, however, both in and out of Parliament were not content. Throughout the northern counties and above all, as we have said, in the town of Manchester there were many hard-headed men of business who were the most convinced disciples of the Free Trade principles of Adam Smith. The men of the "Manchester School" had gone, in fact, very far beyond their master. They would not admit the right of Government to interfere with trade at all. Leave the individual to himself, they said; let him fight out his own battles without artificial assistance on the one hand or artificial obstruction on the other. Break down all barriers, and let free and open competition do the rest; for so and so only could a maximum prosperity be won. Philanthropists in the ordinary sense these men most certainly

were not. They may have been sorry for the sufferings of the poor ; but no appeal to the softer emotions was permitted by a doctrine which expressly encouraged them to exploit the poor man's labour and to hire his services at the cheapest possible wage. The cold logic of hard fact was all that weighed with them ; and its plain lesson was that methods of Protection were a failure and methods of Free Trade, so far as anyone had tried them, a success. As early as 1838 an organization had been started to secure the Corn Law's abolition. That year the price of corn rose as high as 77s. and the reforming party had felt something must be done. So a society was formed called the Anti-Corn Law League. Its chief spokesmen were the two remarkable enthusiasts, Richard Cobden and John Bright. Both were of the middle class ; but both eventually entered the House of Commons, the first fruits, as it were, of the Reform Bill. Cobden was a partner in a Manchester cotton printing factory. He had travelled much abroad, and had kept his eyes wide open for what lessons he could learn. Such experience gave him facts to go on and sheer hard thinking did the rest ; for his mind was the very incarnation of cool common sense ; and if men were open at all to the arguments of reason, Cobden sooner or later was sure to win them round. But if he was the brain of the Anti-Corn Law movement, John Bright was equally its voice. Though by origin a Quaker, accustomed in his talk, as in his letters, to employ the "thee" and "thou" of the Friends' meeting-house tradition, he possessed a natural eloquence of speech which has seldom been surpassed. A fierce sincerity leapt out into his utterance. There was a terror about him when his feelings were aroused ; and, as somebody remarked, he would have made an excellent pugilist, if he had not happened to be a Quaker first. The austere restraint, however, which his puritanical upbringing had imposed on him served merely to intensify the white heat of fervent passion which he kept under so perfect a control. Bright's oratory was like the fire of a volcano, controlled by an intellect of steel. Under the leadership of these two men,

bosom friends from the outset of their common undertaking, the Anti-Corn Law League forged steadily ahead. Run by business men on strictly business lines, its organization was a new portent in English political life. Funds were collected by the hundred thousand pound. Pamphlets were distributed literally by millions; mass meetings, demonstrations, and exhibitions were got up, and attended everywhere with almost unvarying success. The workers, it is true, were too pre-occupied with their own Chartist agitation and largely held aloof, imagining (quite falsely as the issue showed) that a fall in the cost of food would mean a fall in wages too. But the middle class were captured heart and soul; even the farmers were soon half-converted. Only the landlords still refused the light. In 1842 a deputation of northern manufacturers had come south to have an interview with Peel. Peel had denied them a hearing; but the Leaguers were not so easily put off. Month after month, and year after year Cobden was on his feet in Parliament pouring forth his stream of irrefutable statistics, proving his point beyond power of contradiction. In his heart of hearts Peel was probably convinced. "You must answer this," he once said to a colleague, as he crumpled up the notes that he had made; "I cannot." Yet, like Pharaoh, he hardened his heart and hit back with the bitterness of one who knows himself in error. Having taken his position, Peel was not the man to budge for anyone.

There were now but two alternatives on which the Anti-Corn Law League might pin their hopes; they might wait for a general election which would prove the conversion of the country, or they might wait for a famine which would prove the country's need; and the famine occurred first. At the end of summer in 1845 day after day of pouring rain destroyed the standing harvest. A terrible shortage was in certain prospect; but this was not the worst. The potato crop in Ireland, on which the inhabitants were totally dependent, was struck simultaneously with a disastrous blight. Nothing but the sending of English corn across could save the Irish people from extinction. Yet the corn

could ill be spared; and, unless a miracle happened, one nation at least would starve and possibly both. There remained a third alternative, to repeal the Corn Laws and let in foreign grain at a reasonable price. Englishmen were not such fools as to remain blind to that alternative, and it was now therefore as certain as the rising of the sun that the Corn Laws would be repealed; the only question was, by whom—by Peel himself, bowing to the storm, ~~or~~ by his jealous opponents, the Whigs?

On the morning of 4 December, 1845, the readers of "The Times" newspaper rubbed their startled eyes. There in the leading column was an article announcing that the Tory Cabinet had decided on Repeal. How "The Times" had got wind of the secret nobody could tell; but, as time went on, the tale got about of a mysterious and beautiful lady, wife of some indiscreet and too-confiding Minister, who had paid a clandestine visit to Delane the editor and put him in possession of her momentous news. As a matter of fact, the hint had reached Delane from one who was a member of the Cabinet itself; but for all that it was not true. It was indeed a fact that Peel had been converted, and that on his initiative the question of Repeal had been secretly debated in the Cabinet. But, so far from being prepared to move the measure, the Tory Ministers were adamant. Peel's most earnest entreaties had proved useless, and on 5 December he resigned. Would the Whigs be willing to take office and perform the task the Tories had just refused?—that was now the question of the hour. Lord John Russell, the Reform Bill leader, had recently proclaimed his own conversion to repeal; and he was asked to form a Ministry. Sharp jealousies arose, however, between the Whig candidates for office; and, unable to unite the divisions of his followers, Russell was compelled to decline the invitation. There was no third alternative. Cobden and Bright could never have formed a Cabinet, and the task, to which he had already nerved his resolution, fell back once more on Peel. Yet to carry through the measure, which England was now demanding

with one voice, was not even so an easy matter. Nine-tenths of the House of Commons and all the House of Lords were still, let us remember, of the landowning class. Peel could count on the support of the more honest and disinterested Tories, and for the purpose of this one necessary measure on the alliance of the Whigs. But the number of malcontents was certain to be numerous, and their only weakness lay in the absence of a leader. This rôle was filled in an amazing fashion. The rebel Tories found a figure-head, it is true, in the shape of Lord George Bentinck, a typical member of the genuine blue-blooded aristocracy. But he was a man of no more than middling talent; and the real standard-bearer, round whom the forlorn hope of Toryism now rallied, was an upstart middle-class Jew—Benjamin Disraeli. This extraordinary being, half-statesman, half-charlatan, and one day to be the founder of a great Conservative tradition, was at this date no new figure in the House of Commons, having sat there since first he took his seat for Maidstone in 1837. He had already, previous to that date, made some stir in the world of letters by the wit and brilliance of his youthful novels; but his ambition was far from satisfied with that, and he took to politics. His maiden speech in Parliament had been laughed down; but Disraeli was not the man to be discouraged. Raising his voice to a “remarkably loud and almost terrific tone,” he had retorted back upon his mockers: “I have begun several times many things, and I have often succeeded at the last; ay, sir, and, though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me.” That was the sort of man Disraeli was; and with cock-sure deliberation he had now set out to attract public attention to himself. Theatrical in manner, Bohemian in his tastes, conceited to a ridiculous degree, but caring little what he said or did so long as he figured in the limelight, he certainly succeeded in encompassing this end. His dress and whole get-up was foppishly fantastic; “a bottle-green frockcoat and a waistcoat of white, of the Dick Swiveller pattern, the front of which exhibited a network of glittering chains; large

fancy-pattern pantaloons, and a black tie above which no shirt collar was visible, completed the outward man. A countenance lividly pale, set out by a pair of intensely black eyes, and a broad but not very high forehead, overhung by clustering ringlets of coal-black hair, which, combed away from the right temple, fell in bunches of well-oiled small ringlets over his left cheek." His oratory was on a pattern with his dress, flamboyant, impudent, arresting. He spoke easily and frequently on subjects of which he knew little or nothing; but he made men listen by the sheer brilliance of his epigram and the rich, affected bombast of his tones. Like the great Chatham, Disraeli was a consummate actor; and, like Chatham too, he was a born Parliamentary hand. He had an unerring eye for political manœuvre, and seldom missed a chance. As a young man he had interested himself in the condition of the masses; then without demonstrable reason he had suddenly turned his coat and taken up the more repaying cause of the aristocracy. When Peel's Cabinet was formed in '41, Disraeli had expected a place in it; but Peel had overlooked him, and this the Jew never forgave. The crisis of 1846 brought him the chance for his revenge; and he came out as Peel's most dangerous and obstinate opponent, defender of Protection and the Corn Laws, champion of the "landed interest" and the Tory squire. When Peel in January introduced the Bill for the Repeal, this, then, was the man who gathered under his captaincy the rebellious rank and file of Peel's own following. While the Whigs abstained from action, this new Opposition proceeded to put up a sturdy, but discreditable, fight. They called Peel every bad name that they could think of—from traitor downwards. They hissed and hooted like a rabble of small boys, and dragged out the debate by every means that they could muster. The case for retaining the Corn Laws was argued with persistency, and even with ability. All the old arguments were employed, but now with an added spice of rancorous bitterness. Disraeli was irresistible. He taunted Peel unmercifully for having "changed his mind," for yielding

his convictions to a factious agitation, for abandoning his trust of Tory principles and accepting—worst crime of all—the support of the detested Whigs. His sarcasm was withering. Protection, he declared in humorous metaphor, had been a thriving, healthy child. “Who can forget how its nurse dandled it, fondled it!”—the nurse, of course, was Peel—“What a charming babe! Delicious little thing! So thriving!” (Loud laughter from the rebel Tory benches.) Did you ever see such a beauty for its years? This was the tone, the innocent prattle; and then the nurse, in a fit of patriotic frenzy, dashes its brains out (loud laughter), and comes down to give master and mistress an account of this terrible murder.” The “landed interest” (Disraeli spoke as one who knew all about the land) was, he argued, the sheet-anchor of the State. There was no other sure foundation on which the stability of Church, Crown, and Constitution had rested or could rest. The Church!—and the fervid ebullitions of this London Jew were cheered to the echo by a body of country squires. But it availed nothing; in the teeth of the fiercest opposition, delaying amendments, and floods of obloquy, Peel carried his Bill through; and with the aid of the Whig vote it passed the Commons in the May of '46. It then went up for discussion in the Lords.

Peel had won a great triumph; but in the eyes of his own party he had committed a great crime. He had come into power as the head of a Tory Ministry and therefore as the champion of Protectionist principles; and he had ended by trampling both under foot. Retribution followed sharp; and it came over Peel's policy in Ireland. Like other Ministers of the day, he too had had his difficulties to face across St. George's Channel. There Daniel O'Connell, of Emancipation fame, had become the national hero of what we nowadays should call Sinn Féin. In his agitation for the repeal of the Act of Union and the restoration of a Home Rule Parliament, he had the whole of Catholic Ireland behind him to a man. But his methods, like those of Place the Chartist, were patient and pacific rather than

lawless and disorderly; and he too, like Place, had suffered from a revolt in his own ranks. A gang of eager hot-heads, calling themselves the party of "Young Ireland," had defied the wise restraints of O'Connell's leadership and embarked upon a policy of violence, outrage, and disorder. O'Connell, it is true, had done his level best to keep the peace; but the British Government had taken fright. In 1843 Peel had struck out sternly; and, with but scant justice to the Irishman's good services, had clapped O'Connell into prison. Under this firm and vigorous handling the country had quieted down, and all seemed to be going well when there came the disastrous failure of the potato crop in '45. Starvation soon awakened the old violence of "Young Ireland;" and Peel felt it necessary to strike again. At the same time as he moved for the abolition of the Corn Laws, he had brought in another Bill to give the British executive in Dublin stronger "coercive" powers. The police force was thereby to be increased. All folk were to be compelled to keep their houses after a curfew bell at dusk; and the severest penalties were threatened for all crimes against the peace. Such a Bill the Whigs in Parliament felt it their duty and their interest to oppose; and Disraeli's rebel Tories were agreed to do the same. The alliance between these two formidable factions was ominous for Peel; and the vital question was whether or no a hostile vote on the Coercion Bill would overthrow him before he had time to carry his Corn Law measure through. Prudence, however, prevailed among the Whigs. They resolved to secure the passage of the Repeal Bill before they drove its author out of power; and till May accordingly they held their hand. Then without the smallest sense of gratitude they turned and ruined Peel. On the same day that the Corn Law Bill was passed in the House of Lords, the "Coercion Bill" was beaten in the House of Commons by a combination of Disraeli and the Whigs; and Peel resigned.

Thus for the crime of being a true patriot Peel paid the fullest price; but, by those who had exacted it, the crime

was never afterwards forgiven. The squires could only view it in one light, as black treachery to the cause. "They tell me," said the sporting Lord George Bentinck, "that Free Trade will save me fifteen hundred pounds a year on my hunters. But I don't care for that; what I cannot bear is being sold." Nothing could erase from such minds the memory of their great betrayal. Between the Tories ~~who~~ had remained true to the Corn Laws and the Tories who had remained true to Peel, there could be no reconciliation now; and as a consequence of that enduring breach the Tories remained out of office for twenty years or more.¹ Peel had saved England; but in the process he had broken his party. Yet even for his party Peel had done better than perhaps he knew. By his one act of honest principle he had shown that it stood for something more than the blind self-interest of a narrow noble caste. The new Toryism or "Conservatism," as he himself preferred to call it, staked its gage upon a far wider and more honourable issue, upholding in England the cause of intelligent sobriety against the wilder forces that made for reckless change, preferring the wholesome tradition of the past to the more hazardous pursuit of imaginary dreams, and holding fast, for better or for worse, to the existing order until the case for something new were proved beyond a doubt. That the Conservative in modern politics may claim to represent an honest, and even, it may be argued, a well-reasoned point of view is due first and foremost to Sir Robert Peel. He dealt a deathblow to the outworn creed of Restoration squirearchy; and from its grave arose after a while a new body of opinion, representative no longer of one class alone, but drawing its adherents from every section of the whole community, and destined to be led (since such was the irony of fate) by the man who had destroyed him, his old arch-enemy, the Jew.

¹ The Conservatives held office for a few months in 1852 and again for a little longer in 1858; but they never commanded a true majority in the House.

CHAPTER VII

THE MIDDLE YEARS

THE period of Peel's power, bringing with it as it did a complete reversal of our whole commercial policy, stands out as a clear landmark dividing the two eras of the century. Before the final break-down of the old bad tradition England had been a very miserable country; and the plight of the people had grown slowly worse and worse until the terrible climax so narrowly averted in 1846. Long years afterwards men would look back with a shudder of painful memory to the days of the "Black Forties." But with the abolition of the Corn Laws following close upon the famous Budget of 1842, the whole aspect of things changed. Free Trade acted as a wholesome lubricant to the rusting wheels of industry and commerce. Prices dropped; the public became able to afford to buy; the new demand for goods stirred manufacturers to manufacture; they woke up, hired further labour and paid further wages out; and the men, receiving wages, could themselves afford to buy; so once again there arose a new demand, leading in its turn to a fresh increase in output, more employment, more wages, and so, as before, to a fresh increase in demand. It was like the familiar nursery tale of the old woman's pig which would not mount the stile. Until the impetus were somehow or other given, the water would not stir the fire; the fire would not attack the dog; the dog would not approach the pig; and the pig refused to budge. Well might the Old Dame of the Four Countries be given over to despair. Then, under the magic touch of Peel's reform, the whole long chain of effort, link

by link, recovered into life. The wasting paralysis of industry was ended ; and the country began to prosper as never in the past. In thirty years our export trade was multiplied fourfold. During the same period the total of imported grain increased in like proportion ; and wages meanwhile, instead of dropping as the Chartists feared, were rising steadily. It was an overwhelming triumph for the Free Trade theorists. Their most sanguine predictions had proved more than justified. Every one, rich and poor alike, had benefited by open competition ; but it is only fair to say that the manufacturers themselves who had pushed the Free Trade policy had benefited most. For men of business this was in a very literal sense the Golden Age.

For, if the years preceding the Napoleonic wars may be called the seed-time of the Industrial Revolution, the years which followed the Free Trade Budget of 1842 were certainly its harvest. There was a spirit of buoyancy and assurance in the air. Seeing the new demand for manufactured goods, and seeing too the prospect of huge profits for themselves, the men of business launched out with a new confidence and risked large fortunes in the certain hope of winning more. Millions and millions of money were sunk in new factories, new works, new mines. Machinery was brought up-to-date, and output doubled or trebled or far more. Space would fail to tell of all the humming activity in north and middle England during these vigorous years ; but of one great enterprise we must not omit mention—the building up of the great railway system. The locomotive train was still even now a novelty. It was not twenty years since the “Quarterly Review” had poured scorn upon the notion of an engine “which could travel twice as fast as a stage-coach.” George Stephenson, a workman of Northumberland, had first hit on the idea ; and in the early twenties a few small experimental lines had been laid down. Then in 1829 came the laying of a line between Liverpool and Manchester and the famous competition it produced. Of the four engines which competed, one travelled at a snail’s pace, one broke down upon the route, and a third re-

fused to start. But Stephenson's "Rocket" travelled thirty-two miles an hour pulling a train of wagons after it. The opening of the railway, performed by the Duke of Wellington himself, was attended by an untoward accident; for Huskisson, the great financier, slipped under an engine and was killed. The line, however, was a great success; but owing to the general paralysis of trade little more was done till 1842; then after Peel's reform the rage began. Companies were floated, and their shares bought up in eager speculation. Within four years some twenty million pounds were sunk in railways. By 1850 all the chief main lines, except the Chatham and Dover and the Midland, had been laid. Nor were the services either slow or inefficient. Passengers were carried at a penny rate per mile in accordance with the Act of 1846; and, on the old broad gauge track which was then favoured, many a record was established both for non-stop runs and speed. The enormous advantages to trade were obvious; food, coal, and other goods were now transported to an extent which was impossible before. Nor in this connection must we lose from sight the kindred development of steamships. A small paddle-boat, the "Comet," had been plying on the river Clyde since early in the century; but real ocean-going liners were some while in coming. It was not till 1839 that the famous ship "Great Western" made the first steam-driven voyage across the Atlantic, doing the passage in some fourteen days. But once this and similar enterprise had proved successful, the course of improvement and invention never slackened. Everywhere ingenious wits were busy evolving new devices; and there was little lack of enterprising capitalists to take them up. During the first half of the century the number of patents taken out each year had been upon the average well under three hundred; but now the number rose to two thousand and soon to more. In 1844 the first telegraph system was installed between Paddington and Slough; and the railways lost no time in making use of the invention. By 1851 lines had actually been laid under the sea connecting England with Dublin and with Calais. In short, it was

a time when each fresh day saw some new undertaking started or some novelty disclosed. The very face of England was changed during these years.

The change, whether for better or for worse, was a change from country into town. Whole districts, which before had been green acres, were transformed as in a twinkling to vast smithies, begrimed with black deposit and ~~shrouded~~ from the sunlight by a veil of sooty smoke. In rows upon rows of squat, unlovely houses, the workmen crowded like rabbits in a warren. Whole families were herded into a single room; and yet there were still not roofs enough to keep pace with the demand. For the attraction of the higher wages which were paid to factory hands was rapidly drawing the rustics to the town; and, once Hodge had left his plough and his country cot behind him, it was seldom indeed that he returned. At the beginning of the century it is said that broadly speaking 80 per cent of Englishmen were living in the country and 20 in the towns; at the close of the century the proportions had been practically reversed. For agriculture this "rural exodus" had of course its serious side. But the improvement in mechanical appliances enabled the farmers to get on with fewer hands. For twenty years or more after the abolition of the Corn Laws there is no doubt that farming paid; and it was not until the seventies that the real decline began. Then indeed the influx of cheaper corn from foreign countries hit English agriculture hard. Hundreds of thousands of acres were put back under grass; and in some districts large areas became an actual waste. Farms fell into disuse or disrepair. Cottages were left tenantless and crumbled. The life of the country-side was slowly strangled, till even to be a landlord was scarcely worth the while. And so we can now see that, whether consciously or not, the squires who fought Peel's measure were fighting in reality the last battle for their class. The old position and prestige of the land-owning gentry suffered then a fatal blow. The age-long power of semi-feudal tenure which, however much disguised, had still given to

the small minority a control over the whole policy of State, was broken now for ever. What the French peasants had achieved by violence and the sword had been achieved in England by peaceful legislation. With a gesture, if you will, of brave defiance, but at least without appeal to open force, the English landed aristocracy had descended from its pedestal of privilege and merged its future fortunes in the political adventures of the new Democracy. It took fifty years or more before the change should be complete; but already in 1846 the supremacy of the House of Lords was doomed.

II

England then had solved for herself the question which since the great Peace Congress of 1815 had forced itself with such persistent iteration on every nationality worthy of the name—Despotism and Class tyranny as under the old régime, or Democracy, Liberty, and Justice for every rank or class? To that choice England's answer had been given first in the great Reform Bill of 1832, and again more recently in the enforced submission of the landed aristocracy in 1846. How, meanwhile, had Europe answered it? Slowly, hesitatingly, and not without many a back-sliding, the bulk of western nations had followed England's lead. Thanks to the timely aid of Palmerston's diplomacy, Belgium, as we have seen, had acquired her independence and a liberal constitution under her chosen king. In Spain the people's cause, which there too Palmerston assisted, had proved equally triumphant. After a long bout of civil war Don Carlos had been beaten. In 1843 the child queen Isabella had been placed upon the throne; and, striking a mean between the two extremes of revolution and reaction, Spain also had acquired a constitution, more moderate indeed than that of 1812, but still serving as a salutary check upon the pretensions of the Crown. In Portugal equally the democrats had won their battle, and were henceforth to settle down, though not without uneasy interruptions, to a monarchy of a fairly liberal type. In Italy

the cause of liberty had prospered less. Austria, still holding the provinces of Lombardy and Venice, dominated, like an evil genius, the whole peninsula. The ruling princes of the small northern States, Tuscany, Parma, and the rest, were almost directly under her control. Naples in the south was held by her Bourbon ally, Ferdinand the Second, a grandson of the First. The Papal States were a very hot-bed of ~~reaction~~ ; for democracy and the Roman Church sort ill together. Only over Piedmont, Genoa, and Sardinia, three provinces lumped together under a single crown, did a monarch of at all enlightened character preside. This was Charles Albert, who in 1848 undertook the adventurous and fruitless task of driving the Austrians off Italian soil. Defeated at Novara, he resigned his crown, and left Victor Emmanuel his son to make what terms he could. Similar disaster overtook another insurrection which was planned in the same year. Mazzini, the revolutionary thinker, and Garibaldi, the incomparable leader of the "red-shirt" patriots, raised a forlorn hope against the Papal tyranny in Rome. They likewise failed; by 1850 the grand dream of a united Italy had melted into space; yet the spirit of nationality was burning fiercely now, and it wanted but another twenty years till the dream should have come true.

The year 1848 was a great year of revolutions; and elsewhere than in Italy battles had been lost and battles won in the same cause as Garibaldi's. For north of the Alps too the tocsin of liberty had once again been ringing throughout Europe, and within the shelter of their palaces kings had trembled at the sound. The French, as their custom was, had led the way. Already the democrats of Paris were tiring of their make-believe "Citizen King," and a demand for universal suffrage had been raised. Louis Philippe lost heart and fled shamefacedly to England; and the mob sacked his palace of the Tuilleries. So once again a French Republic was proclaimed. A general vote was taken to elect a President; and the glamour of a name which woke old and glorious memories set Louis Napoleon, own nephew to the other, on the presidential chair. The second

Republic however was, like the first, short-lived. Without possessing a spark of his great genius, Louis Napoleon had all the unscrupulous ambition of his uncle ; and three years almost to a day from his nomination to the post of President he demolished the new system by a violent *coup d'état*, arresting the leaders of the National Assembly one morning in their beds. Barricades were erected, as soon as his action became known ; but resistance came too late and Napoleon's troops shot down the Parisian crowd like helpless sheep. Yet the extraordinary thing is that, when a little after he appealed to the people's vote, he was confirmed in his position by a majority of millions. For the French public, though wholehearted for democracy, had been scared by the revolutionary excesses which had followed Louis Philippe's fall ; and they saw or thought they saw in Louis Napoleon a champion at once of the liberty and the stability of France. If further proof were needed of their confidence in him, it was given a twelvemonth later, when he received at their hands the title of "Emperor of the French." Yet such confidence, in fact, was woefully misplaced. For the twenty years which followed his giddy policies were the curse of the people whom he ruled ; and his crowning folly in accepting war with Prussia was to bring down his country to the dust. For all that Louis Napoleon was no despot in the ordinary sense. He was following, however feeble and insane the imitation, in the footsteps of another and far greater emperor, who had embodied in his person and reflected in his policy the aspirations of a militant, ambitious France. The second Napoleon, as the first had been, was a child of the Revolution, but of the Revolution which had inscribed upon its banner not "Liberty" but "Conquest."

Meantime, elsewhere in Europe, the upheaval which had raised this rash adventurer to power had spread revolutionary rumours far and wide. What happened in Italy we have already seen. The English Chartists, though divided and discouraged, had been fired to undertake their last crusade. There was a clamour everywhere for reforms and

Constitutions, and not least among the people of the German States. How much then hung upon the success or failure of these peoples' enterprise, we have come in these latter years to understand. In 1848 Germany stood indeed at the parting of the ways; and it is not too much to say that the world's whole future was moulded by her choice. Since the futile outbursts so easily suppressed in 1819 ~~there~~ had been but little change. The power of Metternich and the monarchs who agreed with him had scarcely been touched by the pressure of popular demands. Austria continued to lead in an ineffective manner the unwieldy Confederation of the nine-and-thirty States. Prussia, the jealous rival, had made a more modest bid for drawing her sister states towards closer union; on her initiative a Customs League or so-called *Zollverein* had been established, whereby the various members of the Confederation (Austria alone excepted) were to trade with one another free of import dues; and thus commercially at least the German people had become one whole. For all that the national consciousness, which Napoleon had awakened, went still unsatisfied; and the discontent aroused by Metternich's repression was working underground. Suddenly, like a thunder-clap, there came the news that France had once again put forth her strength and a Republic been declared. The effect was electrical. During the month of March of 1848 State after State in Germany arose and extorted the concession of a Constitution from its unwilling rulers. Bavaria and Württemberg, Hanover, Saxony, and Baden, all clamoured for reform. Even the inhabitants of Prussia followed suit. But it was in Austria herself, the hub and centre of the whole despotic system, that the cry was most persistent and intense. Led by the fire-brand Kossuth, the powerful Magyars of Hungary declared themselves henceforth self-governing, though ready to remain under the Emperor's crown. In Vienna the crowd was soon howling for the blood of Metternich; and the aged Minister fled for dear life to England. Then, bowing before the storm, his master, the Emperor Ferdinand, gave up the crown; and in a fateful

moment, which decided Austria's destiny for over fifty years to come, it was taken by his young nephew of eighteen, the Archduke Francis Joseph. This young man's accession marked the turning of the tide. With Russian aid the Hungarians were soon crushed; the reforms conceded in the "March Days" were disannulled; the old methods of despotic government returned; and thus, though he was now a lonely exile in a far-off country, the spirit of Metternich prevailed once more. The effects of all this spread wide; and over Germany itself the Emperor's victory in his own Austrian capital had a decisive influence. There an ambitious scheme of radical reform had meanwhile been set on foot. A Parliament of delegates sent from the various States had met in the Rhineland town of Frankfort, and with much windy rhetoric and visionary hope discussed the Union of all Germany under a common liberal Constitution. It was a grand but pathetic enterprise. The delegates were filled with the loftiest aspirations; but they were scarcely of the stuff of which true revolutionaries are made. These grave bespectacled professors, arm-chair students, and political philosophers were doubtless the wisest of their race; but, as they talked and talked, they lost touch with all reality; and, while they should have acted, they talked their chance away. At length the new Constitution was drawn up; and the Imperial Crown of a reformed united Germany was offered to the ruling King of Prussia, Frederic William IV. But it was now too late; the reaction from Vienna had set in. Frederic William was afraid of Francis Joseph, knowing that Austria's jealous eye would disapprove. Nor was he himself wholeheartedly in sympathy with the reforming cause. His own Parliament in Prussia had touched him lately on a tender side by claiming authority over the forces of the Crown. So Frederic William declined the offer of the Frankfort Parliament; and with that the Frankfort Parliament was dead. All its magnificent ideals were now but so much wasted breath. Even the reforms which already had been granted were soon revoked in many of the States. The delegates of Frankfort lingered on, still

talking, till, obstinately refusing to dissolve themselves, they were ejected from the Hall at the sword's point.¹ Germany's opportunity was over. While her head had been high among the clouds, the great decision had been forced upon her by the hard facts of earth. The placid temperament of her law-abiding people, too readily submissive to the powers that be, had proved then, as it has proved, so often, her undoing. She had grasped at liberty, had held it in her hand, and then with a patient philosophic eye had watched it ooze away. The Union of Germany was not to come from a kindly, well-intentioned gathering of delegates at Frankfort. Rather it was to be imposed through a policy of "blood and iron" by an autocratic statesman of Berlin.

So, looking at the map of Europe in the mid-year of the century, we see in the west a girdle of States which make upon the whole for liberty and progress. England has taken her stand. France falters, but has not in her heart of hearts been false to her ideal. Belgium, Spain, and Portugal are on the upward grade. Italy gives promise that she will yet make good. But, in the centre of the Continent beyond the Rhine and by the waters of the Danube, the growth of democracy is stayed ; and already we can descry, as though in germ, the first beginnings of that fatal cleavage which sixty-four years later is to range these neighbour peoples in two irreconcilable and hostile camps, and which is to force upon them at the last the great battle of decision between the Old Order and the New.

¹ The delegates had, in point of fact, moved from Frankfort to Stuttgart.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MID-VICTORIANS AND THEIR CRITICS

I

IF the strength of the eighteenth century Englishman had been mainly "to sit still," enjoying to the full what a secure and comfortable life could offer him, and wasting no fruitless activity upon disquieting enthusiasms, his descendant, the nineteenth century Englishman, was cast upon a very different pattern ; for his strength was to be for ever "on the move." In every sphere of life—in commerce and politics, in art and literature and experimental science—this was a time of overflowing energy, and the mid-Victorian was essentially a man of proverbial "push and go." He never let the grass grow under his feet. He appeared to his continental neighbours then much as the modern American appears to ourselves to-day. As riches were accounted, he was often fabulously rich ; yet in the main he was not spoilt by his prosperity. His wealth was seldom wasted in extravagance or luxury ; for thrift was to him a model virtue, and like a good man of business he employed his savings to the best advantage by improving his factory or extending his trade. "Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves," was a maxim he never wearied of repeating ; and, as one who as often as not had been through the mill himself, he was not afraid, even after his fortune had been won, of continuing to live a hard, industrious life. Nor did success, as is so frequently the case, render the mid-Victorian

indifferent to ideals. His was a period of almost unprecedented peace; yet the memory of the great wars which had preceded it still recalled to his mind the heroisms and triumphs of his fathers, and stirred within him a thrill of conscious pride in British energy and British pluck. He was not ashamed of being intensely, and even blatantly, patriotic. He had nothing in him of the cynic temper which scoffs at all emotions; literary romance, more especially of the sentimental sort, made a strong appeal to him; and "The Idylls of the King," to take but one example, were among his favourite poems. Eager always to be up and doing something for the improvement or betterment of a world which he felt to be already extraordinarily good, he flung himself heart and soul into such a variety of causes, commercial, political, imperial, and even philanthropic, that the whole aspect of our civilized society was remoulded and transformed during these years. Nevertheless the mid-Victorian's outlook on the world was strangely circumscribed. He saw things from an angle which to ourselves seems often absurd; and so much of what he practised was at variance with what he preached that it has latterly become the fashion to write him down a hypocrite. For this we must seek an explanation in his philosophy of life. The mid-Victorian had reduced, or thought he had reduced, the art of living to a set of rules. Things were good or things were bad, not because his instinct or his conscience told him so, but because it could be proved by demonstration like a "rule of three." Honesty, for instance, was a virtue, not because it is man's duty to refrain from lies, but because in the long run it is a *paying* policy. So every action was by him referred to this simple and practical test—does it on the whole contribute to the well-being of society? does it make for "the greatest happiness of the greatest number?" If so, it will be right; and, if not, it will be wrong. The result was that the mid-Victorian, holding this theory as he did, was extremely strict and careful in his personal behaviour. Just as in commerce the prevailing doctrine was that the greatest prosperity could only be

attained by every individual putting forth his greatest effort in the struggle to be rich, so equally in life his maxim ran—look after yourself and let others look after themselves; for if every individual observes the rules of conduct all will go well. So the mid-Victorian was as upright as a Pharisee, at any rate in public. He was careful to do nothing that was not eminently genteel, he went regularly to church on Sunday, perhaps twice in the day, he wore an immaculate top-hat, regarded drink and the theatre as shocking vices, and prided himself equally on the sums he gave to charity and upon his prudent margin of balance at the bank. So long, in short, as he was thoroughly respectable, did not run into debt, and did not openly, at least, break any of the Ten Commandments, the mid-Victorian felt tolerably sure of winning a well-appointed mansion in the skies. But there was another side. In his code of social conduct there was one extraordinary gap; and here perhaps was the most characteristic failing of the age. The Rules of Life, as we have set them forth above, did not apply to business, as the mid-Victorian conceived of it; and, whenever he passed in at the counting-house door, he left the Ten Commandments on the door-step. For inside the office another set of rules held good—the rules of political economy; and these demanded, as we have often said, a ruthless exercise of competition between man and man. So the same individual who distributed his Christmas charities with an unstinting hand thought it his bounden duty at the office to be as hard as stone. As an employer he believed in keeping wages at their lowest; as a trader he considered it no shame to profiteer. "Business was business," he would say; "the rules, however stern, must still be kept; every man for himself and the devil take the hindermost;" and he honestly believed that this was both inevitable and right. And if, as was sometimes bound to happen, qualms and doubts arose, there was a ready salve for the uneasy conscience in the magic words of the Free Trade formula. Do not worry, it told him, if some poor folk should go under; for it will all work out well in the end. Competition between

man and man is the shortest cut to national prosperity ; and the greatest good of the greatest number can be attained no other way.

If such, then, was the creed of the average middle-class Englishman of the nineteenth century, it would, nevertheless, be an error to suppose that it went altogether unchallenged: There was no lack of latter-day Don Quixotes to tilt against the windmill of mid-Victorian prejudice and cant. Indeed, of the outstanding figures in art or literature, religion, philanthropy, or social enterprise (and their number was by no means insignificant), nearly all were in revolt to a greater or less degree against the prevailing spirit of their age ; and, before we pass on to the second half of the century's development, it would be well to pause for an instant and to consider what these men either attempted or achieved. For the influence of their deeds and words, though frequently neglected at the time, sank often deeper than anyone could guess into the mind of succeeding generations.

II

These were days when "sweated" labour—labour, that is, employed at an unfair and wholly insufficient wage—was not so much the exception as the rule. The manufacturers had the whip-hand over the working class ; and in the period before the tide of prosperity set in, it is not surprising that they took labour where they could find it cheapest. One common practice was to contract for a consignment of waifs, strays, and pauper children from the workhouse. At six or seven years of age these unfortunate young creatures would be handed over to the owner of a mill, who employed them to gather up waste cotton off the floor or for such other menial tasks as they were able to perform. They were housed in squalid galleries or barns, fed on unwholesome, insufficient food, and paid little or nothing for their work. By an Act of Parliament in 1802 it was ordained that such child-employees should at least attend a Sunday school and receive some sort of religious

education; but this provision scarcely served to veil the truth that they were practically slaves. Nor was it waifs and strays alone who were so treated. Married men found their own wages so inadequate to meet the family requirements that they were generally compelled to send their children out to work; and one cause for the rapid increase of the population was the dependence of poor parents on what the children earned. It paid to have a family. So at five years of age, or even sometimes less, the boys, and the girls too, were driven forth to labour. Some were sent down coal-mines, where their small stature rendered them of special service. They were set to shut and open trap-doors for the passage of the coal-trucks. They were harnessed half-naked with a chain between their legs to little trolleys and sent crawling on all fours along the pitch-dark galleries, dragging the hewn coal from the seam to the shaft-bottom. In this hideous underworld—a very hell on earth—they would toil for sixteen, eighteen, or even twenty hours together. Often their parents had to drag them forcibly to work. Not infrequently they died. Others (and this employment was confined to boys) were used as chimney-sweeps. Here it was essential to break them in when young; for the chimneys were narrow—a foot or sometimes as little as seven inches square. Until their knees and elbows became hardened by attrition, the boys were of small use; and even then the work was so unpleasant that masters had often to light a fire beneath to make them mount. The employment of women, though scarcely so appalling, was not less disastrous to the nation's health than the employment of young children. Women were much in demand not merely for light duties, but for tasks which imposed a severe strain on their physique. They, too, drew coal—and even, it is said, carried it up in baskets, mounting by ladders to the pit's mouth. Too often between their lengthy working hours and the exacting duties of their home there was almost literally no time for rest; and the health of these young mothers was frequently ruined for life. Even the factories, where the

work was less severe, were sufficiently unwholesome, being dank, insanitary places without proper light or air; nor had the manufacturers the smallest wish or incentive to improve them. In fact, the attitude of employers generally was extraordinarily callous. They took refuge in the argument that such conditions were inevitable, and that the poor must work to live. The struggle for existence was no doubt severe; but it was part of the whole theory of "competitive stimulus," in which the manufacturers themselves so ardently believed. If wages were increased, the poor, it was felt, would only take to shirking; and to interfere with the hours and conditions of employment would simply encourage intractability and sloth. "Nothing is more favourable to morals," said one manufacturer, "than habits of early subordination."

During the first quarter of the century, something had been attempted, but not much done, to mitigate these evils. Even the Whigs, when they came into office, were disinclined to meddle in the matter; and the first effective protest was, in fact, to come from an aristocrat and a Tory. Anthony Ashley Cooper, son of an earl and himself heir to the title of Lord Shaftesbury,¹ was the man. As a schoolboy at Harrow, his feelings had been wrung by the pathetic sight of a pauper funeral; and when, as a member of Parliament, the opportunity was offered him, he did not shrink from the task of exposing the miseries of the poor and denouncing the tyranny of their masters. It was an essential doctrine of the Tory creed (a doctrine dating back to Tudor days and farther, when the Crown's control was still strong and widely exercised) that a Government's duty is to supervise and regulate the nation's industries. Upon this principle the Tories had upheld protective tariffs and such-like interferences with trade; and, as a Tory, Lord Shaftesbury felt convinced that Government interference should not have stopped short there. He wished, in fact, that Parliament should step in between the master and the

¹ Though he did not succeed to the title until 1851 it seems more appropriate to refer to him hereafter by this his best-known name.

man; and support the weaker party by definite legislation. Here, of course, he came into direct conflict with the Manchester School theory; and among his most bigoted opponents, though it did them little credit, were the two Free Trade protagonists, Richard Cobden and John Bright. Shaftesbury's first effort was before their day; and in 1833 he had got a Bill through Parliament insisting on a nine-hour day for children under eleven, and a twelve-hour day for "young persons" between eleven and nineteen. But his real battle for reform took place during the forties. Through his exertions a Royal Commission of inquiry was appointed, and in 1842 it presented its report. The revelation of horror this contained startled the sleeping consciences of Englishmen; and, backed by a strong wave of public indignation, Shaftesbury was able to get another measure through. This—the Mines and Collieries Bill, as it was called—put an end to the employment of girls and women underground. But there was still a deal to be done; and two years later Lord Shaftesbury was again upon the breach. This time his proposal was to cut the working-day for children down to eight hours, and for adults down to ten. Bright and the rest of the Free Trade brotherhood opposed it tooth and nail; and twice in the following years the Bill was quashed. Then by a curious topsy-turvydom of parties, the Whigs, who had entered office on Peel's fall, allowed it to pass through. It was a great personal triumph for Lord Shaftesbury. Almost single-handed, by untiring energy and patient zeal, he had conferred more benefits upon the helpless masses than perhaps any other person of his times; and he had done more than that. By refusing to accept the callous doctrine of the age, and by leading his bold attack upon the selfish attitude of manufacturers, he had set a new standard to his generation, and awakened a new sense of responsibility in those called to carry on the country's government. Yet it is a curious proof how strangely limited was the mid-Victorian mind that, at the very moment when his Bill was passing through the Commons, Shaftesbury himself was no

longer a member of the House, because he had been unwilling to see the Corn Laws swept away. Tory and Whig, Shaftesbury and Bright, each according to his lights, was working for the welfare of the people; one holding the interference of the Government in trade to be the only remedy for present troubles, the other maintaining with no less obstinate conviction that such interference was the trouble's only cause; and the odd thing is that neither could appreciate when the other one was right. It was the mid-Victorian's most characteristic failing to be wedded to a theory and admit no truth in other points of view; but in this who shall say he was alone?

III

Before great reforms can be effected, public opinion must first of all be won. The writer can play his part as well as the politician; and in the task of arousing the conscience of the nation Lord Shaftesbury had no more valuable ally than the novelist, Charles Dickens. For Dickens too was a rebel against the spirit of the age, and in the uses to which he put his art he had struck out a new line. The novel hitherto had dealt almost exclusively with the life of upper or middle-class society. Jane Austen had faithfully depicted the tea-parties and love-matches of simpering young ladies. Thackeray at this very time was satirizing the weaknesses and follies of his generation; but they were the weaknesses and follies of the well-to-do who frequented fashionable drawing-rooms or fashionable clubs. Over the life of the poor and destitute the novelists had agreed, as it were, to draw a decent veil, until Dickens came and of deliberate purpose snatched the veil aside. Born a Cockney, and reared beside the dockyards and water-ways of Rochester, left almost penniless at ten by the removal of his father to the Debtors Prison, and so compelled from that time forward to work for his own living, first as factotum in a warehouse, then as a lawyer's clerk, and finally as a newspaper reporter, Dickens had a wide experience

of the underworld of towns which served him in good stead when he came to write his books. But his experience had done more for him than that; it had roused in him a fierce anger against the treatment of the poor—an anger which even his marvellous gift of humour did not soften. He knew what suffering was; and he was resolved to tell the world. The pictures which he has given in his novels, of workhouse horrors in "Oliver Twist," of the filthy slums of London in "Bleak House," of the senseless barbarities of Dotheboys' Hall, or the mean indignities of the Debtors Prison, were drawn from the very life; and they served, as nothing else could then have served, to awaken public sympathy for the victims of such wrongs. Dickens was artist enough, when he wished to preach a sermon, to conceal the edge of criticism under the cloak of a readable tale; but there were other prophets, struggling authors like himself, who were not afraid to thrust the point straight home. Carlyle, the Scottish philosopher-historian, delighted to deal hard blows against the cant and hypocrisy he saw around him. In his various books and essays he denounced the lip-service men paid to virtue and the miserable half-truths on which they ruled their lives. He held up to them as models the stout lion-hearted heroes, the Cromwells and the Johnsons, who in the past had done battle for the truth. He painted the French democrats who had made the Revolution as men who at the least had been faithful to a cause; and even to Frederic the Great himself (though this to us seems strange) he had paid the homage due to a fearless man of action. Though Carlyle said many hard unpalatable things, men read him none the less. The mid-Victorian even found a lurking pleasure in hearing his own weaknesses abused; and, though Carlyle died bitter and disappointed over his failure to convict a naughty world, yet his influence had been greater than he knew. It had turned men's minds, if only for an instant, towards those grander and more permanent elements in life which they were more than half in danger of forgetting. While Dickens drew them down a by-street on a visit to

the slums, Carlyle had raised them on the wings of vision to the height above the stars—misty perhaps at times and vaporous, but not for that less sublime.

To neither of these writers, however, did it fall to meet with downright argument the theories of the mid-Victorian creed. It remained for a young art-critic, the versatile John Ruskin, to attack the fundamental principles on which the manufacturers had based their lives. The idea that competition was the sole stimulus to effort, and that, unless men were purely selfish, the world could not go round, appeared to Ruskin an inversion of all truth. In his book "Unto this Last" he preached a new ideal, contending that in commerce no less than daily life love, sympathy, and generosity might play their part. Ruskin, in short, was for admitting the Ten Commandments to the counting-house, nor was he even for excluding the Sermon on the Mount. His preaching, like the preaching of Carlyle, seemed during his lifetime to have fallen on deaf ears; yet the principles he propounded have slowly won their way; and the views that men hold now are more akin to his than to the views of Peel or Bright. Ruskin's chief quarrel with his age, however, was rather with their taste than with their economics. He loathed the manufacturers, not merely because they had made the country wretched, but because they had made it ugly too. Factory-chimneys, steam-engines, and power-looms outraged his sensitive soul; and he hated to see the lovely English landscape befouled by the presence of some mushroom mining town. So he denounced the Industrial Revolution and all its hideous works, decried the ruling passion for cheap, machine-made goods, and strove to inculcate a more true appreciation of the artist and his craft. It was largely from his impulse that there arose about this time a new company of painters who themselves were rebels in their art. Seeking to get back from the stale and meaningless conventions of their age to a freer and more natural tradition of the past, they called themselves Pre-Raphaelites and tried to forget all that had been taught in schools of art since Raphael's time. They

endeavoured to paint nature as they saw it with their eyes, not as the critics and masters had said it should be seen ; and in their revolt against the drab artificiality of modern life they turned, much as Keats had turned, to the romance and colour of mediæval days. Rossetti and Burne Jones, and, if in a less degree, both Holman Hunt and Millais, chose as their subjects the scenes and legends of knight-hood and chivalry. William Morris revived the handicrafts of weaving, printing, and glass-painting, upon the model of work done many centuries ago ; and this craze for harking back into the past had its influence on others too outside the Ruskin circle. Tennyson was not free from it. The "Idylls of the King," the "Lady of Shalott," and many others of his poems reflect the tendency ; nor are they the least successful portion of his work. Nevertheless it was a false ideal. It was no less artificial in its way than the conventions which the Pre-Raphaelites despised. Painting and poetry cannot feed wholly on the past ; and the beautiful must be here and with us now if its appeal is to be genuine and strong. The mid-Victorian was not to be converted by the day-dreams of a few romantic youths. He bought their pictures indeed ; but he erected more factories, built still uglier houses, and then—worse horror still—began to plaster them with crude advertisements.

IV

The Pre-Raphaelite revolt was not alone, however, in seeking to win new life and inspiration from the past ; and during these years there had been a great religious movement which equally endeavoured to escape from the unreality and dullness of mid-Victorian worship to the purer atmosphere of an earlier tradition. The need for an awakening was indubitably great. Outwardly perhaps there was much show of religious observance ; men went, as we have said, to church ; but the spirit of Christianity was for all that burning low. The clergy were excellent members of society, the younger sons of squires, as like as

not, who inherited the family living just as their elder brothers inherited the family Hall; they rode to hounds, were friendly to parishioners and neighbours, distributed their alms among the poor. But they accepted in the main the ideals of the environment they lived in; they thought more of what the society would think than of what the Bible said; they had no message, upheld no light to shine amid the darkness—or so it seemed at any rate to some few more ardent souls. Three Oxford clergymen, John Keble, Edward Pusey, and John Henry Newman, undertook a crusade for the revival of religion which in nineteenth century England appeared to them to have been lost. For a remedy they looked back, as we have said, into the past; and, tracing the origin of present evils to the Reformation of King Henry VIII, they found a solution of their own dissatisfaction in a return to the doctrines of the early Church. There at the source might be recovered, so they argued, the purest essence of the Christian creed; nor was it unreasonable to seek it there; the Church of our day and the Church of Anselm and Augustine were in reality one living whole; and the breach of continuity which England had accepted in the sixteenth century had been a fatal step. These views the three enthusiasts and others who had joined them in their so-called "Oxford Movement" proceeded to spread abroad and propagate. In 1833 they began to publish them in a series of well-argued articles entitled the "Tracts for the Times." The public were seriously puzzled and disturbed. From the start it was apparent that the views of "Tractarian" theology were but narrowly divided from the theology of Rome. The doctrine of Transubstantiation, for example, though not precisely stated, was not obscurely hinted at; and the thorough-going Protestant at once was up in arms. Newman in self-defence maintained at first that nothing in his theology was inconsistent with the orthodox dogma of the English Church; and in one of his tracts he made an ingenious, but overstrained, attempt to prove his point, arguing that the Thirty-Nine Articles which define the Anglican faith,

were in no sense contradictions of the true Roman Catholic view, but merely denunciations of the false un-Catholic errors which had crept into its dogma during the later middle ages. Yet, while Newman was employing his great skill of intellect and pen to convince the minds of others, he himself at the bottom of his heart was unconvinced. He saw at last that the English and the Roman faiths could not be reconciled; and in 1845, after a long period of doubt and hesitation, he crossed over to Rome. Manning, who like him was one day to be a cardinal, presently did the same. The public, though not sorry to be rid of them out of the English Church, was still much exercised in spirit. The action of the Pope, who in 1850 established a system of territorial sees to organize the Roman Catholic Church in England, gave rise to fresh anxieties and reawakened the old national fear of Papal tyranny. Men fancied that a widespread secession of clergy who sympathized with Newman was likely to ensue. In this, however, they were wrong. The bulk of Newman's followers were not prepared to follow him to Rome. They preferred to remain inside the English Church and there to work, as best they could, for its regeneration and reform. This "High Church" party, as it soon came to be called, shocked many sober Protestants by the ritualistic practice they revived. The Communion was celebrated more nearly on the lines of the Roman Catholic Mass. Great emphasis was laid on the consecrated character of the priesthood; and in token of this doctrine the High Church clergymen took to wearing various vestments, and donned a surplice in the pulpit instead of the plain black gown then commonly in vogue. Yet they did not for the most part go beyond the limits of the law; and the wise restraint of Keble and other leaders who remained, served soon to pacify the public apprehension. The High Church party showed a spiritual vigour and a zeal for honest work which put to shame their critics and set a model of enthusiasm to the indifferent and the slack. The influence of their example spread wide. Men woke up once more to their responsibilities. Churches

which had been let go to rack and ruin were put into repair. A craze began for restoration, carried out unhappily with more energy than taste; and within a quarter of a century nearly thirty million pounds had been contributed and expended on the work. In many other practical ways a more Christian spirit began to be revealed. As men made money more freely, the more freely too they were prepared to give. Foreign missions, hospitals, and charitable institutions of many different types were endowed and supported by voluntary funds. In works, at any rate, the later generations of the Victorian era were able to justify their faith.

But there is another side to the picture. Perplexities of a quite different sort were soon to assail the public mind; and the man who did most to upset the self-satisfied composure of the mid-Victorian age was not a rebel, but the true-born child and product of that age itself—a Scientist. Space would fail us here to tell of half the progress and discoveries made during the coming years in every department of the scientific field—in electricity and engineering, in anæsthetics and medical experiment, in chemistry, biology, physics, and the rest. One great discovery, however, must stand out, which, for the influence it had upon the mind of man, threw all the others completely into the shade, Darwin's theory of Evolution. Darwin himself was by taste and training a naturalist; and it fell to his lot in 1831 to make a voyage in the South Seas on His Majesty's Ship "Beagle." His investigations among the divergent types of animal life which he found on neighbouring islands led him, after many years' research and patient thought, to formulate his theory. In 1859 he produced his famous book, the "Origin of Species," in which he argued that animals were not by origin of different types, but developed type from type, and step by step, through a long process of adaptation and selection due to the environment in which they lived. In 1871 he was to follow this up further by showing, in his treatise the "Descent of Man," that human beings were no exception to the rule, but were themselves descended

from a branch of the animal kingdom. This startling announcement fell, like an apple of discord, into a world quite unprepared for it. All the accepted notions of philosophy and religion were on the instant undermined. The first chapters of Genesis, for example, seemed now to be demonstrably wrong. So the Bible was untrue. Worse still, a world which had grown of itself by "evolution" could stand in no need of a God to have created it.—All theology was proclaimed by some to be a superstition and a hoax. Indeed, the argument had only to be carried but a little further to prove that all men's ideals could be explained away. They too were "evolved," like man himself, from the instincts, fears, and appetites of brute-beasts. Writers like Huxley and Herbert Spencer developed the force and bearing of such arguments as these; and the fiercest controversies, of course, ensued. The mid-Victorian was profoundly shocked, sadly bewildered, but in part at least convinced. After all the theory chimed in well enough with much of his own theories. If animals developed through a sort of "competition" to survive, and if the history of the world were simply one long desperate struggle for existence, had not he himself assumed long since that struggle was the essence of all life? His ideals thus proved unsound, his religious faith more than a little shaken, his beliefs reduced to a single bare assurance that Matter somehow or other had bred life and that of that life, by a long unedifying process of action and reaction, he, Man, was the result—the mid-Victorian found it difficult to believe in anything at all. Many men became "materialists" outright, seeing no truth in anything but what their eyes could prove, finding no goal in life but the satisfaction of their natural appetites or at best in an obedience to the laws of their own will. Through Darwin's revelation, the mid-Victorian's theory of life was simplified indeed. Man was not an immortal soul, subject to religious rules or even moral rules. Political economy had after all been nearer to the truth. He was simply an animal governed by the workings of biologic law. So fifty years ago the disciples

of Darwin and his creed decided ; and, though we have now outgrown such crude and hasty deductions from the theory, its effects are with us still. Thanks to Darwin's revelation we have come to recognize the history of mankind as one continuous process, and to regard ourselves as but one link in the chain of a development which runs on through all the centuries. Thus, even while we may criticize our great-grandfathers' opinions, we are compelled to remember that from these our own have been moulded and derived ; and we can trace the workings of the evolutionary law in every department of our life and thought.

CHAPTER IX

PALMERSTON AND THE CRIMEAN WAR

I

THE second half of the nineteenth century was ushered in amid a general chorus of crazy jubilation. During the summer of 1851 people talked in London as though the millennium had actually arrived. A grand "International Exhibition" was being held in the grounds of Hyde Park; and the event was taken as a sign of a new spirit of brotherhood prevailing among nations and an earnest of the arrival of that happy day when the hand of every State should be no longer turned against its neighbour, and when wars should cease altogether from the world. The great wave of prosperity, which was the outcome of Free Trade and flooded markets, appeared an incredibly bright contrast to the doleful days of famine and Protection. No shadow seemed to mar the pleasing prospect thus opened to the eyes of mid-Victorian optimists; yet on the far horizon—so far indeed as to be almost out of sight—was forming a cloud, no bigger now perhaps "than a man's hand," but soon to sweep over England, lulled by her long peace, the searching hurricane of war.

The course of party politics during these years was comparatively simple. The events of 1847—the patriotic self-sacrifice of Peel over the Corn Laws and the disastrous split which it had caused in the ranks of his own party—had greatly cleared the air. The Whigs were now firmly in possession, and not likely to lose their advantage for some time to come. From 1847 until 1852 Lord John Russell

was their Premier. Then for a brief half-year the Disraeli-Bentinck Tories put in a stop-gap Ministry; but they had no adequate support within the House itself, and what support they had was yet again diminished by the general election which soon sent them out. So the Whigs returned—this time in coalition with that section of the Tories who had backed Peel against Disraeli. Lord Aberdeen¹ was the new Government's Prime Minister. Russell was Foreign Secretary, and Gladstone, a rising star, undertook the business of finance. But the really outstanding figure of the Ministry, as indeed of all Whig Ministries of the preceding twenty years, was that forceful personality, Lord Palmerston. The country's confidence in Palmerston had by no means diminished since his period of power during the thirties; neither on the other hand had Palmerston's confidence in himself. In many ways (it had better be confessed) this breezy, cock-sure, self-assertive Englishman was what we to-day should be inclined to call "a bounder." Once, not many days after the Prince Consort's death in 1861, Palmerston went down to see the sorrowing Queen at Osborne in a fashionable get-up which would have made a sensation at a race-meeting; even in his official relations with Her Majesty he was impatient and abrupt to the verge of gross discourtesy; and, since Queen Victoria was not one who cared to be brow-beaten, there was small love lost between them. The occurrence which had led to the downfall of Russell's Ministry in 1852 was typical of Palmerston's behaviour. In the closing weeks of the preceding year Louis Napoleon, it will be remembered, had effected the bloody *coup d'état* by which he overthrew the new-born French Republic and himself became virtually dictator in its stead. The news had been received in England with disgust and even with alarm; and the Queen forbade our representative in Paris to vouchsafe any token of approval. Judge therefore the dismay with which she and others learned that Palmerston had interviewed the French

¹ Aberdeen himself was a Peelite, as was Gladstone too.

ambassador in London and expressed himself delighted at Napoleon's act. Lord John Russell at once decided that Palmerston must leave the Foreign Office, before more harm were done. So Palmerston went, and in his fall he brought down the Cabinet as well. But in six months' time, as we have already said, the Whigs were back in power and Palmerston was back along with them. His preference for Napoleon's dictatorship as against the unstable, make-shift policies of the Second Republic may at the moment have run counter to the opinions of most Englishmen; but in all other matters the opinion of most Englishmen were almost identical with his. In fact, his real strength lay in being uniquely representative of both British idealism and British common-sense. He was a mirror of the whole nation's attitude towards foreign politics; and that is why during the coming years he was more and more to dominate the scene.

The strange thing is, however, that the year 1853 found Palmerston no longer at the Foreign Office, but Secretary now for Home Affairs, engaged on drafting details for a new convict system, shutting up the graveyards of ancient city churches, and devising methods by which factory chimneys could be made to consume their own smoke. Yet at this very moment in Eastern Europe a crisis was fast approaching in which the firm hand and wide experience of the one-time Foreign Secretary would be sorely in request. During his previous term of office, more than a dozen years before, the reader will recall a difference of opinion which arose with Russia about Turkey. In the interval nothing had occurred to improve the "Sick Man's" deplorable condition. On the contrary, the Turk was still steadily upon the downward grade; and the Tsar was still as anxious as before to make his own "dispositions for the funeral." At this date, we must remember, the Turkish dominions were enormous in extent. Besides Crete, Cyprus, Egypt, Asia Minor, Syrian, Mesopotamia, and the Arabian Coast, they included the whole Balkan Peninsula as far north as the boundary of Austria-Hungary itself. The Serbs, Rumanians, Bulgarians,

and Albanians were therefore still vassals of the Sultan's crown; but it was only the backward development of these subject Christian peoples which enabled the Mussulman to maintain his hold, and sooner or later the break-up of the whole vast Empire seemed inevitable. Tsar Nicholas for his part was determined that it should be soon. So in 1853, the year of Palmerston's return to office, he had approached the British Government with the offer of a deal. Egypt and Crete he obligingly consented to make over as our share, provided he himself was allowed a free hand in dealing with Turkey in Europe. The impudent suggestion was, of course, rejected; we had come to realize that the holders of India must needs keep an eye on the Levant, and, as in the days of Mehemet Ali, we were determined to maintain the integrity of Turkey as the only secure bulwark against the aggrandizement of Russia and the sole guarantee of safety to our own Empire in the East. Tsar Nicholas accepted the rebuff, having no other choice; but he immediately resumed his old designs, and, if he now wished to fix a quarrel upon Turkey, he had not to look far for an excuse. It arose in Palestine. There, as in the rest of the Levant, the Turk was still, of course, supreme; but by a long-standing agreement the "Holy Places" of Jerusalem and Bethlehem had been made over into Christian hands. Pilgrims were free to come and go at will; the monks of the various sects kept watch over the shrines; and all would have been well if the various sects had only been agreed. But they were not agreed. The Greek Church was mortally jealous of the Roman Church; and the Roman Church was jealous of the Greek. Their bone of contention was usually some shrine. The Sanctuary of the Nativity, for instance, was the subject of a particularly violent feud, and the right to place a new symbolic "Star" above its altar was hotly contested by each set of monks. The Sultan did his best to play off one against the other, and seemed likely to end the imbroglio, as usual, by granting the privilege, which each claimed, to both. Here, however, the Tsar Nicholas perceived the chance he sought. As champion of the "Orthodox Greek

Church," he demanded that the Sultan should decide the foolish squabble in its favour; and, not content with this, he advanced a further claim to be regarded as the "legal guardian and protector" over all Christians whatsoever within the Turkish realm. Prince Menschikoff was sent to Constantinople to extort these two demands; but there he met his match. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the plenipotentiary of England, was a man of exceptional experience and ability. He held the Sultan, as it were, in the hollow of his hand, and when Menschikoff arrived with his two insolent proposals, it was Redcliffe who engineered an agreement on the first point and persuaded the Sultan to give point blank refusal to the second. The Tsar was in no mood to accept the Turks' denial, and he at once ordered his army across their frontier to the north. But he made the unwarrantable error of supposing that the attitude assumed by Redcliffe was mere bluff, and that under threat of war the support we had hitherto extended to the Sultan would collapse. Now, it was true enough that the British Cabinet as a whole had not made up its mind. Lord Aberdeen, the Premier, was pacifically inclined; and many of his colleagues shared their chief's reluctance to plunge England into a quarrel which was not directly hers, and in which our material interests were not visibly at any rate involved. There were, however, two factors without which the Tsar had reckoned. One was the influence of Louis Napoleon, now "Emperor" of the French. This man, almost by the necessity of his position as well as by both temperament and taste, was something of a "fire-eater." To justify his recent seizure of the crown he felt the need of some magnificent achievement; and, however ludicrous the aspiration, he longed to set his name beside his uncle's on the roll of military fame. He, therefore, was hotly in favour of war against the Tsar. He had deliberately encouraged the "Roman" claim against the "Greek" about the shrines in Palestine; and, as the crisis thickened, his ardour acted as a stimulus to our resolve. When the British fleet was ordered to the Dardanelles, he sent the French fleet after

it; and he certainly did not mean it to withdraw again without something tangible to show for it. The second factor, as may easily be guessed, was Lord Palmerston himself. As Secretary for Home Affairs, he was not, of course, in charge of the negotiations; but on which side within the Cabinet his influence was thrown could scarcely stand in doubt. Suddenly, at the height of the crisis, Palmerston resigned. Did this mean, as he himself asserted, a mere domestic split within the Cabinet over some trifling question of political reform? or did it mean (as every one believed) that the Premier's pacific policy had won the day and that peace with Russia was to be maintained at the price of breaking our word with the Turk? It almost looked as if it did. Yet the issue was to be determined, and that before many days were out, in a very different and most decisive fashion. On 30 November of 1853 the Russians caught a Turkish squadron outside Sinope and sank it out of hand. This clinched the matter for our wavering statesmen. The allied fleets were ordered through the Straits; Lord Palmerston resumed his place within the Cabinet; and in the early weeks of the New Year France and England declared formal war upon the Tsar.

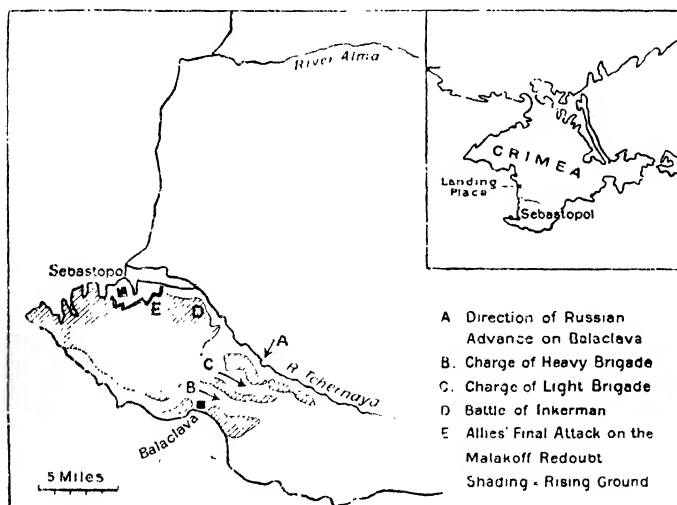
II

As usual, the attitude of Palmerston, who beyond all question was eager for the war, reflected accurately the public sentiment. John Bright and the other advocates of peace found few supporters. It tickled the vanity of Englishmen to feel that they were embarking upon war in an unselfish cause. There was even a curious tendency to consider the Turk a "gentleman" thoroughly deserving of our friendship and assistance; and the martial ardour of the journalists and club-rooms was confident of victory without considering the cost. Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine a country more ill-prepared for the ordeal which lay ahead. It is a commonplace to say that peace-time soldiering is a poor preparation for the problems of the field; but things

in 1854 were worse than that. In these bustling and go-ahead times when every year saw marvellous progress in machinery, in science, and in almost every other branch of human knowledge, the one institution which had stood stock still was the British War Office. There, that Tory of Tories, the aged Iron Duke, had succeeded till the day of his death in 1852 in blocking every pathway toward innovation or reform. The staff was composed of pompous, stiff old colonels, possessed of obsolete, but very obstinate convictions, little experience and no imagination, gold-laced, narrow-minded martinets of the "Up guards and at 'em" type. Red Tape reigned supreme. Organization, fit to carry on a war at the other end of Europe, there was none, and, what was more, the would-be organizers were quite unconscious of their own shortcomings. The scandals which the subsequent campaign disclosed are now the laughing-stock of history—the ship-load of soldiers' boots all made to fit one foot, the ludicrous inadequacy of medical arrangements, the consignment of shirts which "could not be unpacked without a Board;" but then they were tragic realities which cost thousands upon thousands of invaluable lives and the needless prolongation of a hideous war. Even when face to face with the actual conditions at the front, the military mind refused to re-adapt itself; and not all the personal bravery of our commanders could ever atone for their gross incompetence and wilful inability to learn.

Before the Allies could arrive upon the scene in any formidable numbers, the Turks had themselves made good their northern frontier, and by the end of June the invading Russian army had recrossed the River Danube in full flight. Meanwhile it had been decided by the Cabinet in London to carry offensive operations on to Russian soil itself; and in the middle of September a mixed force of allied soldiers—some fifty thousand strong—was disembarked on the west coast of the Crimea. This large peninsula, about twice the size of Yorkshire in extent, contained at its south-west tip the formidable fortress of Sebastopol, accessible but almost impregnable from sea, and admirably

adapted for defence on the land side. This town was the objective of the allied expedition, which put in, as we have said, some five-and-twenty miles away to north of it. The landing was unopposed, and it was not until they reached the River Alma on their southward march that any Russian resistance was encountered. Here, however, the passage of the river-bed was very bitterly contested; and it was only by fierce fighting that Lord Raglan's army succeeded in



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pressing the stubborn enemy back. Unluckily the French, who had gone astray during the battle, now refused to continue the pursuit. They were without their knapsacks; their commander, St. Arnaud, was ill, and felt unequal to the task. So the great opportunity was missed; and Sebastopol, which might now have been taken by the rush of a forced march, remained to defy our efforts for twelve interminable months. By the time the Allies had arrived within striking distance of the town, the Russian general,

Menschikoff, had rallied his command, and, while drawing away with his main army in a north-easterly direction, he left a sufficient garrison to hold the fortress. Todleben, a highly skilful engineer, was toiling day and night to improvise new earthworks and defences. The civil population had been conveyed away. Sebastopol was ready; and there was nothing for it but to set our soldiers down to the regular business of a siege.

The operations of the rest of the campaign fall into three more or less clearly defined phases. First, in the late autumn, came a daring Russian effort to throw us off the peninsula into the sea; at Balaclava and again at Inkerman that effort was defeated. Then followed the weary waiting of the winter months and the struggle with that most deadly enemy of all—the Russian cold. With spring, however, the tide began to turn; and the third phase of this prolonged and stubborn duel consisted of assaults—eventually successful—on the beleaguered town.

In the autumn then of 1854 the allied armies had begun their year-long task. Their numbers did not admit of a complete investment upon both sides of the harbour; so after a preliminary bombardment they settled down into siege quarters, the French to the south-west and the British to the south-east of the town proper. Despite the vigour of their batteries, however, they made but little headway; and the watchful Menschikoff, seeing his own command now swelled by reinforcements, determined on a sudden stroke. He came down out of the north, where he had been hovering since the Alma, and on 25 October he swooped round the British right and struck towards the little harbour of Balaclava in the rear. This harbour was the base of the British commissariat; its capture would have rendered almost untenable our whole position; and the moment was therefore one of incalculable peril. The ground to be traversed by the Russian army before reaching the Balaclava plateau on the coast is divided into two narrow plains or valleys by a long low ridge which runs almost due east and west. This ridge was lightly held, as

it so happened, by a few Turkish regiments and guns ; they were easily dislodged, and the Russians were soon in possession of the crest. As, however, their cavalry descended into the southern plain, they were attacked from a new quarter. The "Heavy Brigade" of British cavalry, led by the Scots Greys and Inniskillings, swept down the valley and took them on the flank. Thus caught, the Russians faltered, and after a moment's desperate fighting they were sent scampering back over the ridge. By this stroke the battle was virtually decided ; but it was not over yet. For at this point occurred what was perhaps the most famous incident of the entire campaign. The Russians had now rallied on the north side of the ridge and appeared to be about to carry off the Turkish guns which they had captured earlier in the day. Lord Raglan, seeing this and seeing also that the "Light Brigade" stood unengaged by the west end of the ridge, gave orders to forestall the enemy's withdrawal by advancing "to the front." If by this order he implied, as very probably he did, an advance to the general *British* front (that is, towards the north-east), and so the interception of the enemy's retreat, it was strategically sound ; and no harm would have been done. Lord Lucan, however, who received the order, interpreted it in a quite different way, and took it to imply that the Light Brigade should charge the Russians *immediately opposed to them*, advancing, that is, along the valley, on the north side of the ridge. In that sense he proceeded to instruct Lord Cardigan, who set the Light Brigade in motion. It was the maddest of adventures from the start. The northern valley was surrounded on three sides by Russian troops ; some still holding the ridge upon the south of it, others stationed in reserve upon some hills to north of it, while at its eastern end lay the Russian battery and captured Turkish guns which were now the Light Brigade's objective—in the words of Tennyson's poem, it was a "valley of death" indeed. But the Light Brigade never faltered. They lost more than half their number before they reached the valley's end and disappeared from view into a cloud of

smoke. What happened then is but a confused tale. They rode in among the Russian guns and sabred many of the gunners where they stood; some even drove off approaching cavalry. Then out of the smoke came back in straggling parties of twos and threes and fours the remnant that remained of the ride of the Six Hundred—one hundred and ninety-eight survivors all told. The charge was never followed up by infantry attack; and there for the ~~day~~ the matter rested. The Russians did not retreat, but remained in possession of the field, an uncomfortable threat henceforth to our communications with the coast. Yet the day had been saved, however narrowly; and by our soldiers at least, if not by our commanders, imperishable glory had been won.

Menschikoff was by no means discouraged by the issue of the Balaclava fight; and, before winter closed, he determined on a further effort to break our line of siege. One misty morning early in November two Russian armies, one coming from the town itself and one from open country, hurled themselves upon the extreme right flank of our position. The battle of Mount Inkerman,¹ as it is called, was from first to last a soldier's fight. Mist veiled the combatants from one another; regular manœuvre was impossible; and all that our men could do was to mow the Russians down when they appeared through the dim twilight from the valley. This they did, however, with such continuous success that the enemy was never able to deploy his forces or to make his numbers felt. It was his final effort. Winter was upon them, and the two armies settled down into comparative inaction. But for our men at least there was now another and even more terrible struggle to be waged.

The second phase of the campaign is summed up in the one word "Winter." It began in the middle of November with a hurricane of pouring rain and snow; and there was more of the first than of the second during the next few weeks. The plight of our troops was terrible. Tents were blown away. Fuel for fires was unprocurable. Roads became a

¹ Mount Inkerman itself lies to the north of the River Tchernaya; but the actual battle took place between the river and the town.

quagmire. Mules and horses perished ; and all supplies had to be brought up by hand. The toughest of constitutions was unequal to the strain ; and thousands soon fell victims to frost-bite, cholera, dysentery, scurvy, and low fever. At one time there were more men upon the sick-list than on the fighting strength. Nor were conditions at the base in any degree better. The medical organization, feeble from the ~~start~~, was utterly incapable of coping with such numbers. The voyage from Balaclava to the Bosphorus, which ought to have been done in a few days, took often as much as a fortnight or three weeks ; and on that fearful passage sometimes as many as a quarter of the sick and wounded died. At Scutari, which lies opposite Constantinople on the Asiatic side, a British hospital awaited the survivors. It was a dismal place—a monster barrack-building utterly unfit even for men in health. A hideous stench pervaded it ; for there were sewers under the floor. There was a shortage of bedsteads ; none but the coarsest bedding ; no basins, soap, or towels. The only food was “ill-cooked hunks of meat, vilely served at irregular intervals,” and not too much of it at that. The staff of doctors was ludicrously inadequate ; and they were almost overwhelmed. Luckily, however, in late autumn Miss Florence Nightingale had arrived upon the scene, with an ill-defined commission from the Government to organize the nursing. Her explosive energy and indomitable will-power served in the course of time to bring order out of chaos. She fought the hydra of red-tape and beat it, lashing the astonished mandarins with the fury of her tongue, and refusing to accept the official excuses for inaction or delay. Soon comforts of every sort—even dressing-gowns and tooth-brushes—had been provided. Funds too were forthcoming to continue the good work ; for “The Times” correspondent had exposed the scandal ; and the public sent money with an open hand. As for the soldiers, they worshipped Miss Nightingale almost as a saint. “Before she came,” said one of them, “there was cussin’ and swearin’ ; but after that it was ’oly as a church ;” and indeed Miss Nightingale deserved all the

praise that can be given her. She had founded, by her personal example, the noble traditions of the British Red Cross.

By spring the worst was over. Troops had been poured out in ever-increasing numbers. Victor Emmanuel, King of Piedmont and Sardinia, had thrown in his lot with us and sent a contingent; and soon there were two hundred thousand allied troops in readiness for the re-opening of the campaign. Meanwhile a railway had been laid from Balaclava to the camp; five or six hundred siege-guns were pounding Sebastopol to ashes; and the trenches were creeping daily nearer to the walls. The Russians too had suffered severely from the winter months; but they clung on still with a grim tenacity. The old defences being quite untenable, Todleben had constructed earthworks in advance of the town walls; and to carry these was the allied troops' immediate task. Louis Napoleon himself had a grand scheme for a conclusive victory, ending with his own triumphal entry to the town. Happily, however, the plan was shelved; and the assault was to be directed by more practised hands. Péligrier, now commander-in-chief of the French forces, began in June to press attacks against the Russian earthworks; but a grand assault on the 18th miscarried and the allies suffered a severe set-back. This misfortune broke Lord Raglan down, so that he died soon after; and it was not until September that the end came into sight. The Russian defensive line hinged mainly on two bastions, known as the Malakoff and the Redan. The French were operating against the former of these works; and when they had driven their trenches to within a distance of five-and-twenty yards, it was decided to launch a joint offensive. Noon was the hour chosen; for that was the time when the Russian garrison was usually relieved. The ruse succeeded beyond all expectation; and the French occupied the Malakoff with little loss. At the Redan, however, our own men's attack met with a different welcome. Their charge was beaten back by a fierce fire; the few who got inside the work were soon dislodged; the approach

trenches got blocked, as the reserves came up ; and such was the confusion that the order was given for the attack to cease. Yet at that very moment the Russian retirement had actually begun. The capture of the Malakoff had decided them ; and during the night their troops were crossing to the north side of the harbour. Magazines were exploded, buildings burnt, and finally at daybreak the bridge itself was blown into the air. What remained of Sebastopol was ours at last. It was the 9th of September, twelve months almost to a day since the first expedition landed on the Crimean coast

Tsar Nicholas himself had died in early spring ; and his successor, Alexander II, though too proud to accept humiliation, was more disposed, perhaps, to treat for terms. The French too were ready to cry off ; and in the ensuing winter a peace-treaty was accordingly arranged at Paris. Under its terms, Sebastopol was to be left dismantled ; all war-ships were to be withdrawn henceforth from the Black Sea ; and a small strip of country by the Danube mouth was to be ceded to the Turks. Thus Russia got off lightly. Her power to harm was not permanently crippled ; and, as time would prove, she was to return to the attack. Nor was it merely the ambitions of a Tsar which rendered this inevitable. The plight of the Balkan Christians under the misrule of the Turk was becoming past endurance ; and, twenty years exactly from the close of the Crimea, the revolt began. The Bulgarians rose in arms in 1876 ; Serbia and Montenegro followed them ; and at the sight of this the Tsar could not withhold. Soon the Russian armies were in full march upon the Turkish capital itself. By England naturally this was not allowed to pass. Old fears were awakened ; and our fleet was sent up through the Dardanelles to safeguard Turkish interests once again. This time, however, our help did not avail to save the "Sick Man's" skin, and the Sultan had to submit to a serious amputation of his vast dominions, Rumania, Serbia, Montenegro, and to all intents and purposes Bulgaria, were given independence. Only a comparatively narrow strip of country across the southern

Balkans was left in the hands of the egregious Turk. Thus far at any rate did Russia's policy prevail ; and even if no actual territorial gain accrued to her, she won an immensely increased prestige and influence with the new independent States. In short, the most that we had achieved by the Crimean war was to prevent these struggling nationalities from being absorbed into the Tsar's own realm. Seeing how great a source of conflict and unrest they have been from then till now, it may perhaps be doubted which solution was the better for the world. Our policy of championing the Turk had appealed to its supporters as disinterested and chivalrous ; yet, considering the tyrannous character of Turkish rule, it was difficult to square it with our traditional professions of liberty and justice ; and if it led, as possibly it did, to a wrong solution of the Balkan problem, then the cost in blood and treasure—fifty million sterling and two hundred thousand lives—was a heavy price to pay for the adventure.

III

That it should have been Lord Palmerston himself and not Lord Aberdeen who brought the Crimean war to its successful issue was no more than right and proper. Aberdeen had gone into the struggle with a faint and doubting spirit. His conduct of the campaign had been nerveless and incompetent ; and before long the revelations of gross mismanagement had raised a storm of public anger. Early in 1855 a motion of censure was brought forward in the House ; and Lord Aberdeen had been defeated by a large majority amid shouts of mocking laughter. There was only one man who could take his vacant place and restore the shaken confidence of the electorate. And so Lord Palmerston became Prime Minister at last ; and it was his matchless vigour and determination which repaired the deficiencies of our military equipment and organized the final triumph of the campaign of 1855. Palmerston, in fact, had now become the "inevitable man." The nation felt it

could not do without him ; and for the remaining ten years of his long life he enjoyed a run of unprecedented power. Once indeed in 1858 he was temporarily dethroned ;¹ and a stop-gap Ministry of Tories occupied the Government benches for a brief fourteen months. But apart from that there was scarcely the shadow of a cloud to dim the great man's glory. "Pam," as he was affectionately called, was the universal hero. Men felt that, even if he had not saved England from disaster, he had at least preserved her from humiliation and disgrace. More than this, his bold foreign policy had raised her to a pinnacle of world pre-eminence, making her at once the terror of her enemies and the self-appointed champion of the wronged and the oppressed ; and, so long as he lived, Palmerston continued to play this curious double rôle of imperialist knight-errant. He rapped the knuckles of the Shah of Persia who had dared in 1856 to invade Afghanistan. Next year he sent an expedition to punish the Chinese, who had the impudence to detain a merchant ship ; and, by way of compensation for the misdemeanour, he extorted an indemnity and extensive trading rights. Even in Europe he was regarded with a deference which bordered upon awe. All realized that, so long as he was leading her, England would not stand idly by and see small nations bullied ; and when Garibaldi and his band of fellow-patriots struck their great blow for Italian Independence, it was our sympathetic attitude which deterred the other Powers from hostile intervention. Foreign statesmen of the reactionary type vowed under their breath that, if the Devil had a son, Lord Palmerston was he. One famous episode in his career (though it occurred before the last period of his power) may stand as a sample of his policy.

¹ The circumstances which led to his fall were curious. A certain Italian exile, named Orsini, had manufactured in London the bomb with which he attempted to take Louis Napoleon's life. The French demanded that measures should be taken to prevent the recurrence of such things ; and Palmerston complied by introducing a Bill imposing severe penalties on alien conspirators in England. The public, however, were at this moment strongly anti-French, being suspicious of Napoleon's war-like temper ; and the Bill was so much resented that Palmerston was thrown from office.

It fell on this wise. In 1850 the Greek mob at Athens had made a violent predatory attack on the house of a certain foreign resident, Don Pacifico by name. Don Pacifico was by origin a Jew of Portugal ; but before he moved to Greece he had become a naturalized subject of Great Britain ; and this impudent outrage done upon his house was therefore an insult to our own prestige. As such at any rate Lord Palmerston considered it and demanded apology and compensation for the act. The Greek Government demurred, appealed to France, and the French took up their cause. As the quarrel thus developed into an international affair, and our own relations with a neighbouring Power became not a little strained, Palmerston himself was bitterly assailed at home for his high-handed action. A hostile motion was brought forward ; and he was charged with imperilling the peace of Europe in order to replace the household furniture of a single miserable Jew. Palmerston's reply was a triumphant defence of his whole principle and policy. He spoke for five hours on end, arguing that this country's most paramount concern was to protect her nationals, and that wherever they might go throughout the world her "strong arm" should follow them and keep them safe. In the early hours of morning he concluded his appeal by a famous peroration in which he declared that England's meanest subject was no less England's child, and that there could be no prouder boast for any man alive than to claim the privilege of that security and to repeat, though with a difference, the magic formula of the ancient world "CIVIS ROMANUS SUM." The speech disarmed his critics ; and it gives us in a nut-shell the whole secret of Palmerston's success. He was popular with his country-men, because he tickled their vanity. He flattered them into the belief—holding it in all sincerity himself—that they were the very salt of the earth, a chosen people, predestined to govern and to lead. To him the world at large was but the raw material to be disposed as the interests of his country might dictate, and to be moulded after the principles which his country had conceived. And just because Lord Palmerston

was so convinced of England's mission in the world, he took it for granted that England herself stood in no need whatever of improvement. He at any rate made no effort to improve her ; and during his term of power he initiated no great measure of progress or reform. When others formulated schemes for the extension of the franchise, he simply could not understand what they were after. He fully believed that all that could be needed had been done. He was the last of the old Whigs, content with the traditions of 1832 and blind to the deeper stirrings of a democracy now coming to the birth. Yet, when he died—a hale old octogenarian—in 1865, England was on the very eve of momentous changes and developments which, had he lived to see them, he would have ridiculed as mad. “When my place is taken,” he is said once to have observed, “we shall have strange doings ;” but, though the words were true enough, in his heart he did not understand.

CHAPTER X

INDIA AND THE MUTINY

I

THE true motive which underlay our anti-Russian policy was, as we have said, anxiety for India. Palmerston had dreaded the collapse of Turkey, because he saw that it would open for Russia a doorway to the East; and he knew that such expansion could have no other end than to menace our own hegemony beyond Suez. Nor in this view was Palmerston's instinct much at fault. Turkey indeed stood firm; but step by step through the remainder of the century Russia was to push her frontier southward across the plains of Central Asia, until at last she seemed to be knocking at the very gate-ways of the Hindu Kush. Against the threat of such aggression our policy has been to maintain an influence over Afghanistan and so secure for ourselves a bulwark in this "buffer state." The policy was begun—though not too tactfully—in the first year of the Queen's reign. An expedition was sent up through the passes and occupied the Afghan capital, Kabul. A nominee of ours was set upon the throne, and a British garrison left with him for support. But the plan was not to prosper. In 1841 the tribesmen rose against us and murdered the British agent in cold blood. Our troops in their retreat were waylaid among the passes, and only a solitary survivor escaped to tell the tale. We took revenge by re-entering Kabul and burning its chief buildings to the ground; but, this done, we came away, and for a while at least we left the Afghan princes to themselves. The Russian threat,

however, did not cease to trouble us; and some thirty years later the agents of the Tsar were found to be tampering with the Ameer. So in 1878 our previous tactics were repeated. A fresh Ameer was installed, and our suzerainty once again asserted by a vigorous show of force. The same result ensued. The British "resident" was murdered, and the Afghans rose in arms. One of our garrisons was cut off in Kandahar, and it was only by the swift marching of Lord Roberts, who hurried down from Kabul in the nick of time, that a second disaster was narrowly averted. Then once again, as on the first occasion, we withdrew, leaving a more friendly Ameer on the throne. His fidelity to England was happily maintained. By the time of his death in 1901 fears of the Russian menace had begun to fade away; and by a treaty made with the Tsar's Government six years later all cause for disquietude was finally removed.

Apart from this the maintenance of our Indian frontiers has not in fact been a very serious problem. With Lord Hastings' overthrow of the Mahratta power in 1818 our last dangerous rival had been finally removed, and the whole peninsula from the Himalayas to the sea lay completely at our mercy. What independent States remained were one by one brought under our control. As a rule but little expenditure of force was needed, and sometimes none at all. The most obstinate resistance came from the Punjab Sikhs. They were born fighters and fanatics in religion; and when in 1839 their friendly ruler, Ranjit Singh, had died, their fierce hostility broke out from its restraints. Two bloody wars were fought within the next ten years before the mastery of the Punjab was won. Elsewhere we had not been idle. Scinde, a little earlier, Oude,¹ and Lower Burmah a little later were added to our realm; and thus midway through the century we could fairly claim that India was definitively ours. Some States were left under their native rulers, paying homage and tribute upon terms.

¹Oude had previously been under our "protection," but not till now was it definitely annexed.

Others were administered directly by British governors and agents. Apart from the occasional necessity of dealing with troublesome hill-tribes, our task was to lie no longer in the soldiers' hands. We had now to undertake the more honourable duty of guiding India in the paths of peace.

An undertaking more arduous, more fraught with delicate and dangerous problems, and (there can be no hypocrisy* in adding) more incontestably worth while, it is beyond the power of imagination to conceive. To reconcile the people to the unwelcome yoke of their foreign masters was in itself no easy matter; but over and above this there was a second problem far more perplexing and more intricate—to reconcile the Indians to each other. The past history of the country had been one long tale of feuds and jealousies and devastating wars. Unity had never been imposed except by force; and the sources of disunion were infinitely complex. To begin with, the Indians are not one, but many peoples. They speak no less than forty different languages. By origin they spring from a variety of breeds. Three main types stand out. There are first the descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants of India—black-skinned fellows with flattish negroid noses and feeble pliant character. This type predominates in the South, where the invading stocks had penetrated least. In north India generally, the Indus and Ganges basins, we find a second type—Aryans, tall and loose-limbed with a transparent brownish skin. These won their way by conquest, coming down from the Persian plains in prehistoric times. In Bengal to the north-east we come on a third type, with slit eyes and colour of a slightly yellow tinge which betrays Mongolian blood. These represent no doubt an incursion from Tibet; but here, as indeed in every part of India, there has been an indefinite cross-breeding of the strains. In the central plains especially a pure descendant of any of the stocks is rare. Yet, wherever they are found, the Aryan element stand out in one respect; as the descendants of the conquering race, they have maintained a superiority of "*caste*."

And here we arrive at a further complication; for no country in the world was ever so distracted, as is India, by social differences. At the top of the scale stand the Brahmins, pure-blooded Aryans, a sacred priest-like class with immense authority; at the bottom stand the outcasts of society, despised for their low birth, regarded as unclean, and strictly forbidden to approach within a measured distance of a Brahmin's person. Between these two extremes are a multitude of intermediate grades, varying in rank according to their occupation or the purity of their blood. The distinctions are clean-cut; and intercourse between the different "castes" is frequently forbidden by religious law. Here, however, we touch upon the greatest and most permanent source of disunity in India; for, what nationality is to the peoples of the West, religion is to the peoples of the East. The men of different religions are their traditional and natural foes. Two main creeds are to be noted and they are bitterly opposed—the Hindu and the Mohammedan.¹ Mohammedanism came in with the Moslem invasions of mediæval times; but, being as it is a great proselytizing creed, it has won its way with men of every type, and the original doctrine of the true Prophet has been locally corrupted in the process. The Hindu creed, upon the other hand, goes back to the earliest days, dating from the entry into India of the conquering Aryan stock. Its ancient Sanskrit lore, the Veda hymns, are as old as Homer himself. The Brahmins are its holy men: its gods are Rama and Krishna, incarnations of Vishnu, Siva, his wife Kali, and many others; and here again there are innumerable divergencies of custom and belief. But though Hindus may differ about the titles of their gods, they are all agreed in a common hatred of the Moslem. The folk of the two

¹ The Mohammedans number about seventy millions; the Hindus of every sort over two hundred millions. Thus of every twelve persons eleven belong to one or other of these two creeds. Another religion once important, now rare, is Buddhism, an offshoot of Hinduism, dating from its foundation by the prophet, Gautama Buddha in the sixth century B.C. Its most salient doctrine is the attainment to a state called the Nirvana, i.e. the annihilation of passion, failing which any number of re-incarnations may be evolved.

religions stand apart, as it were two separate nations. They dwell, as a rule, in different quarters of the towns; and any excuse for a quarrel is readily accepted as the order of the day.

Such, then, was the character of the swarming and distracted millions, which a handful of white administrators had undertaken to weld into a peaceful whole. It was a staggering proposition; and we may well ask wherein lay any prospect of success. Now it is useless to deny that force and the power of the sword lie at the bottom of our rule in India; yet it is equally obvious that force alone would never have sufficed, and that without further aids and qualities to back it, the task of our Empire-builders could not have been achieved. In the first place, then, that task was greatly simplified by the extraordinary veneration and respect which the European's superior force of character inspires, strengthened not a little by the native's natural tendency to regard the white Sahib as belonging to an almost superhuman "caste." In the second place, the Oriental mind, though versed itself in every form of slowness and deceit, is curiously appreciative of fair dealing and honesty in others; and the British sense of justice has not merely served to soften the edge of inevitable grievances, but has endowed our representatives with an immense prestige. Thus fortified, the British governor has been able to command an almost incredible obedience from multitudes which might with a little resolution have swept him and his companions wholesale into the sea. Yet besides personal authority, something more was needed—a constructive policy; and here it must be admitted we have taken our stand upon more debatable ground. As the Cæsars endeavoured in their day to "romanize" the world, so we have made it our goal, in part at least, to "anglicize" the Indian. We have tried to impose upon him the civilization of the West. Nor does this mean merely that he has learned to mimic us in trivial matters, that he wears spectacles and often even trousers, and can repeat a few catch-words of our slang. The influence goes deeper. The ideas

we have put into his head are ideas imported from Europe ; they run counter in many ways to the settled tradition of his life ; they are alien to the whole temper of his mind ; and though we have recently begun to realize the dangers and draw-backs of such a policy, and have set ourselves to tackle native problems from the native's point of view, it is certain that more than half our troubles in dealing with the Indian have arisen from this source.

The policy may be said to have been started when in 1836 Lord Macaulay, as member of the Calcutta Council, decided that the training of the more educated Indians should be administered *in English*. The advantages of such a course were obvious. No useful lessons could be learnt, Macaulay argued, from the study of the Hindu literature itself ; its history a series of grotesque and foolish fables "abounding with kings thirty feet high, and reigns thirty thousand years long ;" its geography made up with "seas of treacle and seas of butter." British common sense dictated that the Oriental mind should be braced by the study of European history and trained upon the masterpieces of the English tongue. So, for better or for worse, it was arranged that little Indians should learn the Anglo-Saxon alphabet ; and big Indians shape their political ideas on the model of our own. The plan had one great merit. It gave a real cohesion to our policy. The country was to be run on lines which we thoroughly understood and which we knew by experience to be sound. The bad and barbarous habits of the superstitious natives were to be corrected by the higher standards of a Christian morality ; and the whole vast country united by a system, evolved out of practice of our own historic past. Of this policy Lord Dalhousie, governor from 1848 to 1856, was a notable exponent. He continued the campaign against the hideous custom whereby Indian widows were burnt on their dead husbands' pyre. He hunted down the "Thugs," a hereditary band of ruffianly assassins. He pushed forward education ; installed the telegraph ; built railways ; reformed the administrative system and even encouraged natives to take a part

in it. Within a few years the bewildered people saw the familiar institutions on which their life was built changed or imperilled by an effort, gradual no doubt and tentative, but still a manifest and deliberate effort to "westernize" the East. It was a great ideal; and in the long run its benefits have far outweighed any harm that it has done. Yet it could not fail to cause a deal of friction; and, before the new system was well launched upon its way, there came a testing crisis which was not merely to strain our resources to the uttermost, but to prove whether or no our intentions regarding India were sincere, and whether we could indeed maintain our high ideals of justice and fair government in the face of a savage and dastardly attack. Twenty-one years after the Education Act of Lord Macaulay, the Mutiny broke out.

II

What drove the sepoy soldiers to their sudden frenzy has never been properly explained. It was no carefully considered plan; nor was the conscious desire for their country's independence an original motive in the rebels' minds. Small grievances bulked larger. Lord Dalhousie's revolutionary measures had stirred in them a superstitious horror. The railway and the telegraph were regarded as the outcome of black magic. The observances of "caste" had been infringed, if not insulted. Troops had been sent over the sea, who were forbidden by their religion to cross the "black water." The Brahmins, in particular, felt that their own hold upon the people was being undermined, and resented the intrusion of the Christian missionary. Last, but not least, the sepoys had an inkling that the cartridges served out to them, the ends of which it was necessary to bite before insertion in the gun, were smeared with the fat of their sacred animal the cow. A wave of indignation spread over the country such as makes the Oriental fanatic "see red."

There was a prophecy current in the talk of the bazaars that one hundred years from Plassey the British rule would end; and now in 1857 the hundred years was up. On the



INDIA AT THE TIME OF THE MUTINY.

late afternoon of Sunday, 10 May, the British residents of Meerut, in the neighbourhood of Delhi, were startled by the sudden crack of muskets. A certain Colonel Finnis had found the native soldiers releasing a number of their

comrades from the guard-room ; he had tried to stop them and had been shot dead. In a moment all was uproar. Buildings were set on fire, and Europeans butchered as they ran for safety through the streets. The commander of the station lost nerve and failed to act ; and by morning the mutineers had broken away to Delhi. There were no white soldiers whatever in the native capital (it was part of the agreement we had made) ; and the sepoy regiments were useless for defence. By Tuesday morning there was not a foreigner in Delhi but was either dead or a captive in the rebels' hands ; and the aged descendant of the Mogul emperors had been crowned King of India in the palace of his fathers. This last act was in reality an afterthought. The Mutiny was no truly national revolt. The mass of the population stood by and watched the soldiers at their work ; the chief of the Mahrattas and the Rajputana princes remained loyal to us throughout ; Southern India was scarcely touched at all. The area of disturbance was, in fact, confined to the northern provinces between the River Indus and the Ganges valley. There the news of Delhi and Meerut spread like explosions in a magazine. Wherever native troops were, they fell on the Europeans tooth and nail. In many places our folk were taken by surprise and massacred before they could escape. In two important centres, however, resistance was more effectual. These lay barely fifty miles apart in the upper valley of the Ganges ; and their names were Lucknow and Cawnpore.

Cawnpore was an important military centre. It was held by a British garrison, less at that moment than three hundred strong ; and many of the soldiers had wives and families with them. News of the Delhi rising very naturally alarmed the commander, General Wheeler ; but with characteristic generosity he refused to show an open distrust of his own sepoy regiments ; and, instead of dismissing them from the strong magazine and putting it in a condition for defence, he preferred to herd the whole body of British residents and soldiers into a miserable makeshift fort at some distance from the town. A low mud wall was thrown

up to form a breastwork; and the women were housed in a rickety old building in the centre of the space. The attack was not long in coming. On 4 June Nana Sahib, a local potentate, egged on the mutineers; and soon the British camp was being raked from end to end by a torrent of musket-shot and grape. The central barrack quickly became untenable; the women and children sheltered, as best they might, in holes dug in the ground; and even here many were killed by the incessant fire. The only wells were covered by the sepoy guns, and the garrison suffered intolerably from thirst. Yet the defence went on; every time the enemy charged, they were beaten back with loss; and the mud wall was held. Three weeks passed thus, and there was no sign of relief. At length, on the twenty-first day of the siege, Nana Sahib made a show of granting terms, and offered a safe conduct as far as Allahabad. About nine hundred persons in all had taken up their quarters in the fort, of these half were now dead; but on 27 June the survivors marched out to the neighbouring River Ganges, where boats had been provided in advance. No sooner were they aboard than Nana's treacherous intentions were disclosed. Fire was opened on them from the river bank. There was no loophole for escape; and almost all the men were butchered in cold blood. The women were carried back to a filthy prison-house, there to await the pleasure of their fiendish captor. Three weeks later a relieving column under Sir Henry Havelock came marching up the Ganges. Seeing the game was up, Nana gave orders to massacre the prisoners, and then fled. When the relief force entered, there was not a single survivor to be found; but a well, choked with mangled bodies, told its tale.

At Lucknow, not far away, the end was happier, but the ordeal more prolonged. There the force at the disposal of Sir Henry Lawrence was much more considerable. Besides a thousand British combatants he was able to count on the fidelity of seven hundred sepoys and some cavalrymen of the Sikhs, who throughout the period of the Mutiny remained astonishingly loyal to their recent conquerors.

The "Residency" selected for defence was a substantial building, fortified with bastions and embrasures, and rising like an island among the clustering tenements of the surrounding town. Here from the last day of June Lawrence and his company were laid under close siege. The commander himself was killed within a week; but General Inglis took his place, and the defence was carried on. The enemy were enormously superior in mere numbers, at one time reaching, it is said, the total of sixty thousand men; but more than this they possessed the great advantage of good training. Their gunners worked the cannon with efficiency; skilled engineers drove mines under the walls; and more than once a breach was blown in the defences which were barely held against the flood of the attack. The most serious menace lay, however, in the nearness of the native houses to the Residency walls. From this cover the enemy were able to search the buildings with continuous fire, snipe the unwary, and dig their mines unseen. Constant vigilance was needed night and day; and, as death thinned the ranks of the defenders, the strain of the long watches became unbearable. But despite all the garrison clung on. By the end of August the position had grown desperate. One week of September passed; then a second and a third; but help was now at hand. Sir Henry Havelock, having reached Cawnpore in the middle of July, had attempted, but in vain, to press on to save Lucknow. His numbers were too few and he had been compelled to fall back. By 15 September, however, reinforcements had joined him under Outram; and together the two marched to the town's relief. They were resisted stoutly by the rebel army; and inch by inch they had to fight their way through the streets of the straggling town. But our soldiers had been goaded to a frenzy of excitement by the sights they had witnessed at Cawnpore, and they pushed on like men possessed. The flag was still flying on the Residency walls when Havelock's column reached it; but, though the combined numbers of the relief force and the garrison were now sufficient to sustain the siege for months, it was impossible

with the women and children and the wounded on their hands to contemplate retreat. So the defence was continued, until well on into November Sir Colin Campbell's Highlanders came fighting through the streets of the lower town. Then Outram, who had taken over the command from Havelock, did not wait, but pushed out to meet the sound of the advancing pipes. The two parties joined hands; and together they were now able to evacuate Lucknow carrying the non-combatants along with them. The siege had lasted but a little short of one hundred and fifty days.

Sir Colin Campbell's arrival meant more than the relief of the holders of Lucknow. For his presence in India marked, in fact, the turning of the tide. This sixty-year old veteran, whose apprenticeship in arms had been served under Moore in the Peninsula, had now been sent from England to take over the command; and he was soon to be followed by the first batch of reinforcements so eagerly and anxiously awaited. When the Mutiny broke out, there were less than fifty thousand British troops in India, their normal strength having been seriously diminished by the withdrawal of regiments for the campaign in the Crimea; and the sepoys outnumbered what were left by fully six to one. Now, but only in the nick of time, the balance was to be gradually redressed. Troops were poured out to Calcutta; and sooner or later it was evident that we should regain the upper hand. In the meanwhile, however, and without the aid of Colin Campbell, a great blow had been struck at the heart of the rebel cause. Delhi, the native capital, had been retaken; and this was the work of Sir John Lawrence, brother of the defender of Lucknow and civil governor of the Punjab. Within his own province Lawrence had succeeded in holding the Mutiny in check; but not content with this he was determined that an attempt should be made for the recovery of Delhi. He could not go himself and leave his province; but it was on his advice that a British force was sent to undertake the task; and it was his vigour in supporting it with guns and reinforcements that

crowned the undertaking with ultimate success. It was an impudent adventure—three thousand Englishmen attacking a strong fortress held by a well-trained army ten or twenty times their number. All they succeeded in doing for the moment was to occupy a ridge that lies above the city and to hold it through the summer against fierce and continuous attacks. Meanwhile, however, they were gradually reinforced. Lawrence had been busy in the Punjab raising a local corps of loyal Sikhs; and these, when they were ready, were sent after the rest. By September there were upwards of nine thousand troops upon the Ridge; and the man had arrived who was to be the heart and soul of the subsequent assault upon the town itself—John Nicholson. At dawn of 14 September the attack was launched after a fierce bombardment. Four separate parties undertook to force an entrance at various gates or breaches in the walls. Three gained a footing; but at the famous Lahore Gate the fourth was bloodily repulsed; and Nicholson himself was killed in renewing the attempt. Still the worst was over; by desperate fighting through the narrow streets our men increased their hold. The Mogul “Emperor” fled; and on the 20th of September the royal city was once more in English hands.

The capture of Delhi, as Lawrence had foreseen, had an immense influence upon the native mind; and Sir Colin Campbell’s task in crushing the rebellion was greatly simplified. By the spring of the next year help from home was more than adequate, and Sir Colin struck with vigour. He took back once again the city of Lucknow which he had himself relieved and afterwards evacuated during the previous autumn. Then by a series of “drives” he hunted down the rebels, sent detached forces to deal with outlying districts, and by the end of 1858 had definitely succeeded in stamping the Mutiny out. It was during this last period that there came what was perhaps the supreme test of the whole long crisis. Officers fresh from England were clamouring for reprisals and revenge. But it was not in such a spirit that India had been held or could be held for

long. Severe punishments no doubt there were. Rebels caught red-handed in some brutal act were shot from the cannon's mouth; and executions of a more normal kind were numerous enough. But men like the Lawrence brothers and John Nicholson had never stood for a policy of "frightfulness." Gentlemen to the core, they knew how to be firm and they knew how to be fair. They had learnt to know the Indian; and if they inspired a real devotion and affection in some at least of the natives under them, it was because they in their turn had shown affection too. When all was over, it was their spirit which prevailed. Lord Canning, the Governor who had seen the trouble through, had kept a cool head and generous heart amid endless provocations. "I will not govern in anger," he had said; and though sarcastic critics nick-named him "Clemency Canning" for his lenience, he remained true to his word. In the proclamation which he issued in the name of Queen Victoria at the end of 1858, it was promised that in future the rights of native princes should be scrupulously observed, that freedom of religion should be allowed to all, and that no Indian, whatever his creed or nationality or colour, should be debarred from suitable employment in the service of the Crown. It is by such treatment of her subject peoples that England has deserved her destiny.

III

The Proclamation of 1858 was a landmark in the history of our occupation; for it altered the whole basis upon which our administrative system was built. Since the famous India Bill, passed by the younger Pitt in 1784, the control of India had been shared between the old East India Company and the British Parliament itself. The Company had retained in its own hands the detailed management of affairs upon the spot; but the larger lines of Indian policy and the appointment of the more important administrative officials had been controlled from home,

mainly by a Board of six Privy Councillors sitting with a member of the Cabinet for President. In 1858, however, the Company's share in the administration was abolished once for all. The British Government shouldered the whole burden; and a Secretary of State for India became responsible for our Imperial trust. Since then the work of organization has increased beyond belief; and, though the main structure of the system stands unchanged, its inner machinery has been developed and perfected in a hundred different ways. The Executive Department, which carries on the government and administers the law, comprises a large staff of civil servants. At the head is the Viceroy, appointed by the Crown for a fixed term of years, and assisted by an Executive Council of eight members who form, as it were, the Indian Cabinet. Under him are Governors, appointed to control the various Provinces; and under these again the administrators of "Districts," called "Collectors" or "Deputy-Commissioners," who collect taxes, dispense justice, register the land, and supervise the well-being of the folk. Besides these, there is a whole host of minor public servants, inspectors, tax-gatherers, secretaries, and clerks who are employed for the thousand and one duties which crop up. Such is the machinery of actual government. The making of the laws, upon the other hand, is carried on through different channels. Our Parliament at home is in theory the source and fountain-head of all authority; but in practice, under the Government of India Act, 1919, legislation is now delegated to a new Indian legislature consisting of two Chambers, the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly, whose members are partly elected and partly nominated. The Provinces too have their legislative councils, dealing with local problems of business or finance; and in every "district" there are subordinate committees with which the "collector" can co-operate and consult. Thus, while Parliament itself does in fact rule India from above through its Viceroy, governors, and civil servants, yet Parliament's control has been to this extent decentralized, that it leaves much of the machinery to work itself, accepts readily the assistance and

advice of those who know the problems at first hand, and has been ready, as time passes, to allow the natives a very liberal measure of self-government. Bureaucracy, or government by experts and officials, is now in fact beginning to be tempered by a gradual introduction of the representative principle; and thus we have been true, and more than true, to the promises given in 1858. Little by little the natives have been admitted not merely to official employment of a routine sort, but to posts of high dignity and influence. Since 1907 especially, when Lord Minto as Viceroy and Lord Morley as Secretary of State worked together to give the educated Indian a greater share in his country's management, the sincerity of our purpose has been abundantly established. For some years now two native representatives have sat on the Council of the Indian Secretary at home. Natives have been admitted to the Viceroy's Council for administration as well as for the making of the law. On the provincial councils the Indian members exceed in number the British. There are many native judges; and for better or for worse large numbers have been admitted to other Civil Service posts.¹ The privilege of self-government is, in short, being extended with an ever-quickenning pace; and at this very moment the daring legislation of Mr. Montagu is opening up still wider possibilities. An Indian, Lord Sinha, was for a time Parliamentary Under-Secretary for India, and then a Provincial Governor. Natives are to be drafted in still larger numbers into the various councils and administrative departments; and, while the more important problems are still to be decided by the Viceroy and Executive Council, the native element is now at length entrusted with real responsibility in minor spheres. This ingenious distribution of administrative functions between the Indians and ourselves is a bold experiment;

¹ It should not be forgotten that many native States have been left to the local prince or Rajah; British officials are indeed told off to assist and advise these native governors; and in one way or another our control has been extensive. Yet, thanks to the Englishman's inherent gift for an illogical compromise, the system has worked smoothly; and the native prince disposes, while we are content merely to propose.

for in theory at least a country can scarcely serve two masters. But, though the "Dyarchy," as the dual system has been called, has yet to prove itself effective, its tendency is plain. Democracy, nothing more and nothing less, is to be the ultimate solution of the country's problems. The principle of election is to be developed there, as here, and the Indian taught through practice to exercise his vote. In a word, the day is drawing into sight when India may become mistress of her own destinies once more. There are long distances to travel, many pitfalls and dangers lie ahead; but rightly or wrongly we have set our compass for the goal and we cannot now draw back. It is not for nothing that, as a symbol of our purpose, we have restored to India a historic privilege, and made Delhi what it was in the days before we came, the country's Capital.

The undertaking to which we set our hand in civilizing India has been, as we said, abundantly worth the while. To ourselves it has brought remunerative trade and an opening for all sorts of business enterprise. Beyond this we have sought no selfish benefits. No tribute is paid by India to our pockets. The revenues there raised are in part, indeed, employed to finance the British garrison—considerably increased since the dangerous Mutiny days and now proportionate to native regiments as nearly one to two. Otherwise the taxes are entirely spent on the development and welfare of the country; and the improvements already effected are beyond belief. Agriculture, for instance, has been well-nigh revolutionized. In the old days crops were utterly dependent upon weather; and a single drought would wipe out the population of whole provinces by famine. But since the middle of last century our engineers have been busy. Irrigation works have been conducted on a gigantic scale. Canals bring water when the rains are insufficient; and thanks to the railway system corn can now be transported to such districts as otherwise would starve. Yet famine even so is constantly occurring, claiming its victims by thousands at a time; and the problems of progressive agricultural development keep the wits of our officials

perpetually at work. Nor have other sources of production been by any means neglected. Industries of the European type are barely in their infancy as yet, but they are growing fast. Mines have been sunk for coal. Jute and cotton mills are entering into competition with our own north-country factories. Even steel and iron works are making their appearance; and thus, although the population of the towns is still but a tiny fraction of the whole community, the artisan class is steadily upon the increase. Wages are rising; the standard of living year by year improves; wealth is being won. For the Industrial Revolution has India in its grip.

But to this development there is a more serious side; for herein is being born the greatest, perhaps, of all the problems we must meet. We said above that education had been the source of half our troubles, and it is in the towns especially that those troubles have been bred. The agricultural peasants—nine-tenths or more of the entire three hundred millions—are averse to education. Three out of every four villages are still without a school; and not one in ten of the adult population can either read or write. But the town dwellers are different. There schools and universities have been established; and the Indian, when he learns, can learn apace. Unhappily it is too often the man of shallow character who shows the greatest aptitude for learning. The Bengalee Babu, for instance, has a marvellous memory; but he is sadly deficient in moral stamina, and generally lacks sound judgment. And thus there has arisen the most serious danger which confronts us in India at this day. Such a man, puffed up with the pride of his new learning, and ambitious for promotion to administrative posts, is doomed inevitably to disappointment. He has not the character to bear real responsibility; and he finds himself passed over and left scribing at his desk. So not unnaturally the failure of his hopes leads on to discontent; discontent in turn has led to disaffection; and disaffection to revolutionary talk. Seditious clubs of such disgruntled persons have gathered in the towns. The education we have given them

has put into their heads the political notions and catchwords of the West—nationality, democracy, and so forth. Representative government is hardly as yet possible in a country where nine-tenths of the folk can neither read nor write; but it figures largely in the textbooks of the schools, and the sound of it is attractive to the native student's ear. So among the more hot-headed the cry has been raised for Independence. They would have India for the Indian and for the Indian only. They would break away from the shackles which now bind them, and sweep the hated taskmaster from every nook and corner of the land. Nor will anything short of full and complete freedom content their fevered fancy. The extensions of self-government which have recently been planned, are in part at least devised to satisfy this craving. But, like the Sinn Fein Irishman, the Indian agitator will not hear of compromise; and he has set himself deliberately to frustrate or to discredit, if he can, the successful working of our new concessions. Yet there can be no other road to India's happiness than the road which we have taken. Some day, perhaps, she may become in truth self-governing; but the day is not now. Until the people have been trained for that development, until they have learnt enough at any rate to exercise a vote with some intelligence, and until, above all, a class of stronger character and clearer vision has emerged among the ranks of educated natives, England must continue to carry on the task, which she has carried on till now. We have brought India out of chaos and distress to prosperity and order; we have kept Hindu and Mussulman from flying at each other's throats and have caused them to live peaceably as neighbours; last and not least, we have undertaken to train the more intelligent in the difficult art of politics and government. But, if to-morrow we were to abdicate our trust and to leave the country to its own devices, then every man's hand would be turned against his neighbour. Moslem would fall upon Hindu, and Hindu retaliate on Moslem. The lessons taught by nearly seventy years of peace and unity and order would be forgotten in a night-time. Village

would renew its open feud with village. Caste would trample upon caste; and no less surely would there be a swift return to the old turmoil and anarchy and bloodshed than day will follow when the night is over and the sun rise from the sea.

CHAPTER XI

PROGRESS AND REACTION ABROAD

AFTER the agitations of the Crimea and the Mutiny England enjoyed a well-earned period of inaction and repose. The last five years of Palmerston's administration were, as we have seen, dull to the verge of torpor. The Ministries which followed were chiefly interested in legislative problems. Trade flourished ; parties squabbled ; laws were passed ; but the sixties on the whole were happy, prosperous, uneventful times, when the rich became steadily richer, when even the poor were moderately contented, and when every one alike was mainly occupied in minding his own business. But in the external world it was a different picture. There the battle-grounds of causes old and new were bitterly contested ; and the seeds of future quarrels, more momentous yet, were sown in the decision of past feuds. Four great wars occurred during this period. Two were fought and won in the name of humanity and freedom—the Civil War in the United States and the war of Italian Independence. Two were fought and likewise won for the German domination of the Continent—the war between Prussia and Austria, and the war between Prussia and France. It is not too much to say that the whole course of the world's destiny was altered in these years ; and, before we can resume the thread of our own national development, we must understand, if only in brief outline, what was taking place abroad.

I

Since their liberation from the British Crown in 1784 the United States had forged steadily ahead, and by now they were almost to be reckoned among the first-class Powers. Their population had increased to more than thirty millions. Their frontiers had crept westwards beyond the Mississippi and across the central plains. Twenty-one new States had been added to the original thirteen. The boundless resources of the country were beginning to be tapped; and the foundations of an immense commercial prosperity had been securely laid. But over all this scene of apparent security and progress there hung a shadow—heritage of a bad past, and cause in the future of a hideous civil war—the continuance of slavery. In the south especially, where the old plantation States had first arisen, the imported negro had always been in great request. The landowners who throve upon the export of raw cotton, were particularly dependent on cheap labour; black slaves cost them nothing but their keep; they could ill afford to dispense with the advantage, and to the gross inhumanity of such a system they hardly gave a thought. In the Northern States, however, where slaves were few and where the old Puritan element was strong, a different view prevailed. Agitation had been set on foot by William Garrison in 1831; and the climax of the controversy came when Abraham Lincoln, the northern party's candidate, was elected in 1860 to be President of the States. Lincoln was one of the world's great men. A gaunt, ungainly figure, with a peculiar rasping voice, he was the very embodiment of that strict, hard, obstinate, and highly idealistic temper which has always marked the genuine descendant of the early Pilgrim Fathers. Fearing that such a man, armed with the power of President, would make short work of their valuable slave system, the Southern States, numbering eleven of the thirty-four, resolved to quit the Union and form a separate Confederation of their own. This, however, Lincoln would not tolerate; and, though his naturally pacific soul rebelled

against the cruel necessity of Civil War, the intractable behaviour of the Southerners afforded him no choice. In the summer of 1861 the Northern army marched down into Virginia, attacked the so-called rebels, and was badly beaten ; and for upwards of four years from that encounter a bitter and destructive war ran on. The North held all the cards. Its population was many times more numerous. Its armies were superior in equipment. The munitioning resources of the agricultural South were meagre ; and a strict maritime blockade imposed upon its harbours cut off all help from Europe. Yet the Southerners fought with a dogged pertinacity worthy of a more honourable cause. The enemy pushed a wedge along the Mississippi valley, and thereby cut the inland States beyond the river from touch with their comrades of the coastal States ; but at this point alone during the first two years did the Northerners make headway. Their attempts to capture Richmond, the Virginian capital, and now the new centre of the confederate South, proved worse than unavailing. Once indeed their *generalissimo*, M'Clellan, came within striking distance of the town ; but, losing nerve, he beat a quick retreat ; and the " rebel " army under General Lee was able actually to turn the tables and to make more than one adventurous incursion upon northern soil itself. But Lee played this game once too often. In the summer of 1863 he was caught near the town of Gettysburg and sent back home with the loss of half his men. This victory of the North marked the turning of the tide. Well backed by Lincoln's grim determination, Grant, the successor of the irresolute M'Clellan, undertook a more organized campaign. He crossed south into Virginia ; and, when Lee's men dug themselves in to make up for their weak numbers, pushed past them on towards Richmond. Near the town fresh earthworks checked him ; and for ten weary months a regular siege-warfare of the modern type set in. Though underfed, inadequately armed, and without hope of victory, Lee and his Southerners clung on, disputing every inch ; but the game was up and Lee knew it. On 29 March of 1865 the gallant soldier handed over his sword.

The North made honourable use of their success ; and for the moment they took no unseemly measures of revenge.¹ Slavery Lincoln had long since abolished for the rebel States at least ; and, when the war was over, the Northern States gave proof of their sincerity by a voluntary acceptance of the same decree. Thus at the cost of a million white men's lives the negro won his liberty. It was still to cost one more. On the morrow of the victory, Abraham Lincoln was shot dead as he sat in the theatre at Washington—a victim to the fanatic hatred of some beaten foe.

For England the Civil War was a terrible disaster. The cotton, exported from the Southern States, fed, as a rule, the mills of Lancashire. The sudden cessation of supply caused a general closing down of manufacture, and thousands upon thousands, deprived of their employment, were brought to the verge of famine. Partly because this damage to our commerce was due to the Northerners' blockade, partly because the Northerners themselves had never shown much sympathy towards England, the bulk of upper class opinion in this country was on the " rebel " side. Two unpleasant incidents bade fair to entangle us yet further. A blockading vessel of the Northern fleet stopped the British steamer " Trent " on the high seas and took off two Southern envoys who were on their way to Europe. This was a flagrant violation of our rights as neutrals. Palmerston blustered ; angry threats were made ; and the two envoys were eventually released. But not much later we put ourselves as badly in the wrong. Complaints were lodged by Lincoln's Government that a ship called the " Alabama " was being equipped at Birkenhead for Southern use. Our Cabinet dallied ; and, when at last the word was sent to stop her, it arrived too late. The " Alabama " had set sail some hours before, as though for a trial cruise. She never reappeared

¹ After Lincoln's death, however, the politicians of the North showed less restraint. They bullied the Southern States in an unseemly manner, exalting the negro at the expense of the whites. Time soon brought revenge. Secret societies sprang up among the Southerners (notably the League known as the " Ku Klux Klan ") which turned the tables on the negroes and succeeded in depriving them of the political vote.

in British ports, and across in western waters she worked a deal of havoc among the shipping of the North. Our negligence, if such it were, was not forgotten; and the "Alabama's" escapade was to cost us pretty dear. A claim was put in, when the Civil War was over, demanding compensation for the damage done. Negotiations were protracted; and feelings ran high on either side of the water. Eventually, however, the case was handed over to the arbitration of a neutral court. The judgment went against us, and we were compelled to pay a sum of three million pounds. It was a signal proof of British magnanimity that we submitted to so harsh a settlement. But such incidents are not so easily forgotten; and, when American policy of more recent times comes under our review, it is well to reflect that our country and the States have not on all occasions been the best of friends.

II

Meanwhile in Europe the fires of nationality, for just ten years damped down, had burst again into a quickened life; and another people had broken itself free from the shackles of despotic monarchy. The peninsula of Italy, as we have seen above, was still made up, as late as 1859, of some half-dozen States; but with one notable exception all were in greater or less degree subservient to Austria. The exception was Piedmont, governed by the King of Sardinia, Victor Emmanuel II; and he it was who once again—and this time successfully—was to raise the standard of a Free, United Italy. Happily for him and for the cause he had at heart, his chief Minister, Cavour, was a statesman of extraordinary genius. For long, enlightened views and for mastery in the art of diplomatic strategy Cavour had few equals. It was on his advice that Sardinia took a hand in the Crimean War, thus gaining a new prestige in the eyes of Europe and earning the gratitude both of England and of France; and to France, when the war was over, Cavour turned for aid. The bellicose Napoleon was by no

means disinclined for an attack on Austria. Cavour played skilfully on his desires; and, when in 1859 King Victor declared war on the old enemy, the French Emperor's troops were soon marched across the Alps to his assistance. Together the French and the Sardinian forces won two great victories. Beaten at Magenta and again at Solferino, the Austrians were driven out of Lombardy. But they clung still to Venice; and, when Napoleon made a sudden halt and arranged terms, that province was left in their hands. With such a compromise Napoleon was well satisfied. In reward for his services he had secured Savoy and Nice; while as for the project of a united Italy, he had no desire to assist in raising up so uncomfortable a neighbour for himself. Cavour, on the other hand, was far from satisfied. Half of his great scheme had been accomplished, it is true. Lombardy had been won back; and some lesser northern States, such as Tuscany and Parma, had voluntarily merged themselves in Victor's growing kingdom. Northern Italy was thus far free; but there remained the centre which the Pope controlled, and the south which together with adjoining Sicily was ruled by the Bourbon despot, Francis, King of Naples. It was against this monarch that the next great blow was aimed; but it was not to be delivered by Cavour. Garibaldi, the leader of the 1849 rebellion and hero of the famous fight for Rome, was here sole author of the wild adventure. He was no statesman, nor even a great general, but a romantic, high-souled patriot, incomparable as leader of irregulars, dashing, utterly fearless, and incorrigibly rash. Once in his early days while cruising off the coast he had sighted a beautiful lady through a telescope, fallen in love with the vision, landed and taken her for his wife. That was the sort of impetuous fellow that he was; and now in the year after the defeat of the Austrians, in rash anticipation of Cavour's more cautious plans, he undertook upon his own initiative to recover Sicily in Victor Emmanuel's name. With a thousand fellow-patriots he seized two steamboats at the port of Genoa, and in them set out to the conquest of the island. King Francis' garrison

failed to prevent the landing, and was quickly driven back upon its stronghold at Palermo. The natives rose at the call of Garibaldi; and with the help of their undisciplined contingents he proceeded to the attack. *Ruse de guerre* was Garibaldi's element; with a part of his command he enticed a large number of the garrison to quit their fortress and pursue into the hills; and meantime, before they could return from their fool's errand, he had fought his way into the town. Thus Palermo was captured. Western Sicily was won; and, as numerous volunteers poured across to join "the Thousand," Garibaldi was soon able to rid the entire island of the last of Francis' troops. When he learnt of the success of this astounding enterprise, Cavour's doubts and hesitations vanished. He did his utmost to stir up revolution among the South Italian subjects of King Francis; and he so far succeeded that, when Garibaldi landed on the southern coast, the royal family departed in ignominious flight. The moment had now come for Victor Emmanuel himself to act, and to claim for his own crown the liberated provinces which the unauthorized "red shirts" had recovered in his name. Garibaldi's impatience to rouse Central Italy was in danger of drawing down the anger of the greater Powers. If the thing was to be done, the King himself must do it; so without more ado an army was sent down to seize the Papal States of Umbria and the Marches. Victor Emmanuel then moved south in person, met Garibaldi, and took the movement under his own control. Rome itself, the Papal stronghold, he wisely left untouched for the time being; but apart from this and Venice the whole peninsula from Taranto to the Alps was now united under his single crown. Nor had he long to wait for the completion of his kingdom. In 1866 alliance with the Prussian arms enabled him to help once more in humbling Austria, and won for him the coveted reward of Venice. Five years later the defeat of France by Prussia opened to him equally the gates of Rome. It had been Napoleon's policy to back the Papal interest; but with Napoleon's fall the last obstacle to Victor's ambition vanished. The Pope

had no choice but to submit ; and thus passed away for ever after a thousand years and more of unenviable history his right, if not his claim, to Temporal Power. He gave up the keys of the city, disbanded his garrison of troops, and retired henceforth to the seclusion of the Vatican. King Victor entered in triumph ; and by a memorable decree Rome became once more the country's capital. Only one blot remained to mar the completeness of Italian unity. Trieste, the great port at the head of the Adriatic, and a part of the Tyrol in the mountains above Venice were left in Austrian hands. In both the inhabitants were largely Italian both by speech and blood ; and their fellow-countrymen of the liberated provinces could not rest satisfied, while these went "unredeemed." The recovery of "*Italia Irredenta*" was not least among the motives that induced them in 1915 to sever the tie of hollow friendship which then bound them to their old enemy the Austrian, and to range themselves in the Great War upon the side of the Allies.

III

Austria's loss of power in Northern Italy was but the prelude to a swift decline. True, she had rallied wonderfully from the black days of 1848 ; and, the young Emperor Francis Joseph having crushed the revolution, her prestige in Central Europe seemed even greater than before. But such appearance of recovery was deceptive. She was no longer capable of uniting under her the unwieldy confederation of the German States ; and, for better or for worse, the future lay with the only power which could. Once at the invitation of the Frankfort Congress Prussia had had her chance and let it drop. She was not to let it drop a second time.

In refusing the Congress's offer of an Imperial crown over a reformed and liberal Germany, King Frederick William had set his face against the path towards freedom ; and he had chosen its alternative—autocracy. Not many days elapsed after the great refusal before he withdrew the Con-

stitution he had recently conceded, and established in its place a different system. The people of Prussia were indeed allowed a Parliament; and every adult Prussian was to have his vote. But the electors were divided into three unequal sections *according to an assessment of their individual wealth*; each of these three sections was to have an equal say in the choice of the members for the Parliament, and thus a few rich men, who would compose the upper section, were to count for just as much as ten thousand artisans who would be lumped together in the lowest. So Frederick William could rely on the sure prospect of support from the wealthy and the noble and had little to fear from the democratic mob; his autocracy, in short, was to rise on the foundation of a veiled, but effective, system of upper-class supremacy or Junkerdom. The Constitution so devised and first decreed in 1849 held good until but yesterday, when the late Kaiser gave up his throne.

But for the Prussian monarch there still remained a struggle. His victory was not definitely won. Though mainly representative of the more wealthy classes, his Parliament was as yet no willing tool. In 1861, on the death of Frederick William, his brother William I assumed the crown; and within a few weeks of his accession conflict with his Parliament had reached a head. This was a testing issue; and it was clear that from this struggle one or the other, Parliament or Crown, must emerge the sovereign power. William was even doubtful whether he should not abdicate; otherwise he foresaw that he must either triumph or, like Charles I of England, lose his head. "And I," said his new Chancellor echoing his thought, "shall fall as your Lord Strafford. It would be no bad figure to have cut." It was the voice of Bismarck, then but a rising man; yet the boldness of his attitude put courage in the King. He set aside the idea of abdication, and determined with Bismarck's assistance to prevail. The quarrel with his Parliament concerned a scheme put forward by the War Minister Von Roon for the reorganization of the Prussian army. The existing system of military service seemed to

the King inadequate; and in order to provide an efficient standing army it was deemed necessary to keep all conscripts with the colours for a full period of three years. To this the public were bitterly opposed; and Parliament had voiced their disapproval. But Bismarck was determined, with or without its sanction, to carry the law through. By the Prussian Constitution a Minister was responsible to the King and not to Parliament; he did not sit as a member of the House; and even its hostile vote could not dislodge him. So Bismarck and Von Roon refused to accept the rejection of the Army Bill. There were heated scenes at which strong words were used on either side; but the Ministers stuck to their guns and defied Parliament to do its worst. Once, when Von Roon was speaking, the Chairman of the Chamber lost all patience and ordered him to stop. Von Roon continued; and the Chairman called for his hat to put it on—the customary signal for the adjournment of the House. Unluckily the hat they brought was not his own, but many sizes too large; and slipping down over the Chairman's ears it enveloped his whole head. The House adjourned amid peals of good-humoured laughter; but the accident was symbolic of its own political extinction. The Prussian Parliament, though it continued to hold sessions, had ceased, in fact, to rule. The taxes were raised without its approval or authority. Political discussion in the country and the newspapers was ruthlessly suppressed; and the Prussian people, with their habitual sheepish character, grumbled, protested—but obeyed. Bismarck had won his battle. He had got his reorganized and strengthened army; and he now prepared to use it. For he realized the secret that war and war alone would bring round the Prussian people to his way of thinking. He knew that, once the cry were raised of "the Fatherland in danger," they would rally loyally to the service of their King.

The famous Chancellor, whose aim and work it was to unite the German States under the leadership of Prussia, had every quality demanded for the task. He was master-

ful, aggressive, and unmoved by opposition, His blunt, determined manner verged often upon rudeness. At the sittings of the German Diet, in which he was a delegate, he made bold to smoke his pipe. This hitherto had been the privilege of the Austrian representative alone; and all looked askance at the Prussian upstart's impudence. But it showed them (what they were afterwards to learn in greater matters) that Bismarck was a man who was bound to have his way. And in getting it he did not stand on scruple. Political morality was not of a lofty character in the nineteenth century; but, while Bismarck made no pretence of pursuing any interest except Prussia's, he was cynically indifferent to the methods that he used. If his ends could not be compassed by diplomacy, he never shrank from the appeal to naked force. "Prussia's ambition," he openly declared, "cannot be carried out by speeches and ceremonies and songs; it can be achieved only by blood and iron;" and in this militarist policy lay the twofold secret of his subsequent success. By war he was to win for Prussia both territory without and unity within. At each triumph of the battle-field he was not merely to enlarge his grip on Central Europe, but was thereby to gain first an increasing confidence and then at length unanimous support from his own Prussian folk; and when the King, his master, had become the German Emperor, there were few left to dispute his authority to rule.

Bismarck had not long to wait before a chance arose of using his new army. Between the Prussian and the Danish border lay Schleswig and Holstein, of which the King of Denmark was Duke. Neither was a very loyal adherent of the Danish Crown, from which in the wild days of 1848 they had tried to break away. Though brought back into subjection, they still chafed under the yoke. Holstein, the southern of the two, was largely German both by sympathy and by blood; and, though Schleswig was more definitely Danish, there was an old tradition that the two should not be parted. When therefore in 1863 the ruling King of Denmark died without a male heir, the German element in the two

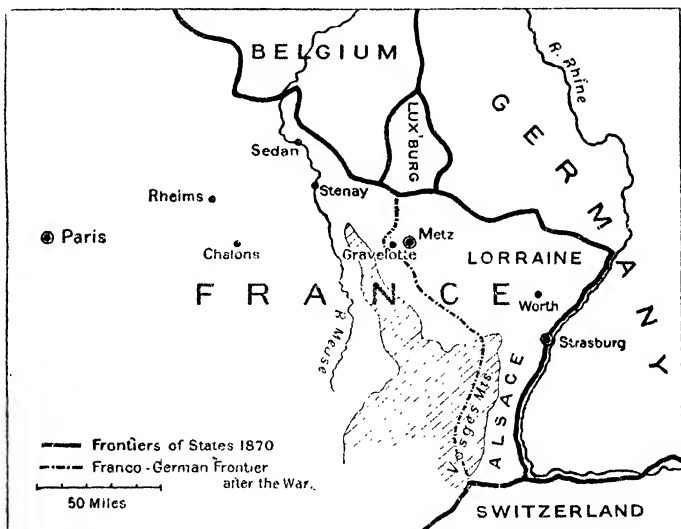
duchies renewed their previous claims to independence and appealed to their German friends to back it up. Bismarck, despite the opposition of his Parliament, was ready; and Austria, not to be outdone, prepared to help. Their combined armies had soon entered Schleswig-Holstein and beaten the feeble Danish army to its knees. Though an armistice was called and the other Powers stepped in, the eventual terms of settlement took the two provinces from Denmark, and left Austria and Prussia to dispose of them at will. Now was the moment for the ever-watchful Bismarck. To annex the debated territory for Prussia was in itself a tempting project (for, as it turned out, it paved the way for her maritime expansion and the eventual cutting of the Kiel Canal); but more important still in the eyes of the Prussian statesman was the opportunity to settle an old score and to destroy once and for ever the rivalry of Austria.

Austria herself was naturally suspicious of the designs which Prussia had on Schleswig-Holstein. But before he pushed the issue to the test of war, Bismarck was careful to make his dispositions. He brought Italy into alliance by holding out to her the bait of Venice. He purchased French neutrality by other specious promises; and when in 1866 his arrangements were complete and he threw down the gage, he had only Austria and a few feeble German States to take account of. The Prussian army was in splendid fettle; in its new and untried weapon, the breech-loading "needle-gun," it possessed a huge advantage over the Austrian muzzle-loaders; and von Moltke, its commander, was to prove on many fields the outstanding military genius of his day. Bohemia was invaded. At Sadowa (or Königgrätz) the Austrian army was encountered, nearly twice the Prussian strength. It was signally defeated; and within seven weeks the war was at an end. The Emperor Francis Joseph bowed to fate and abandoned the old claim, until that moment pertinaciously upheld, to be head of Germany. Prussia's turn had come and well she used it. The Northern States of the Confederation

were reorganized under her direct control. Hanover, Schleswig-Holstein, and a few other provinces were actually annexed to her possession. The rest north of the Main were knit in a close communion, sending their representatives to form a common Parliament or Reichstag in Berlin. Over it was to preside the King of Prussia, holding in his hands the sole executive authority; and behind the King was the Army of the League trained on the Prussian model and with a Prussian in command. One half of Bismarck's scheme was now accomplished. There was but one more war to wage and one more inconvenient neighbour to be dealt with; and the whole of Germany would then be his.

The French Emperor Louis Napoleon had perceived too late the dangerous nature of the Prussian Chancellor's designs. He had intervened indeed to plead for Austria—but after her defeat. More recently he had refused to let the Southern German States join the new Prussian league; but already they were secretly in touch with it. At every turn, in fact, he had been fooled by Bismarck; and in the last great duel of diplomacy he was once again to play into his enemy's hands. For it was now clear as day that war must come between them. France could never tolerate a completely Prussian Germany, and Bismarck's next step was therefore to humble France. But, before he picked the quarrel, he was anxious, if possible, to put the Emperor in the wrong. He had not long to wait before the chance occurred. In 1869 the throne of Spain fell vacant; and for want of a better candidate it was offered to Prince Leopold, a Hohenzollern of the Prussian royal house. This, as Napoleon thought and perhaps rightly, was a bid on the part of Prussia to make Spain subservient to herself. He at once demanded the withdrawal of the Hohenzollern candidate; and much to his surprise the Hohenzollern candidate withdrew. That Napoleon was no peace lover we have already seen; and he was now, to say the least of it, a trifle disappointed that the trouble should blow over without a chance of even rattling his sword. So he sent his envoy Benedetti to interview King William and demand

a complete disavowal of all designs on Spain. They met at a little German watering-place called Ems. Firmly, but politely, the King refused to engage himself to any promise such as was required. Politely also the ambassador withdrew; and, when he asked for a second interview, the King declared it to be impossible, then telegraphed the whole story of the meeting to Berlin. There Bismarck was waiting, anxious and impatient. War was what he wanted;



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but he wished it to appear that the French, not he, began it. The telegram from Ems gave him his chance. By careful omissions, but without altering a word, he made it read as though Benedetti had been guilty of gross discourtesy, and that the King's refusal of a second interview had been a well-merited snub. In this form the telegram was then published in the Press. France blazed with indignation at the insult to her envoy. In a hot fit of military ardour Paris shrieked for war; and, though at this

last moment Napoleon shrank from the plunge, he was compelled to take it. On 19 July he declared war upon Prussia.

Bismarck had got his war, and on the terms he wished; and now the armies, not of the Prussian league alone, but of the whole German nation were soon marching on the Rhine. Those armies were incomparably the finest in the world; their mobilization, which had long been planned, was carried out like clockwork; and not a train, so, it is said, ran a minute behind time. Within a fortnight 380,000 men were massed and ready to advance on the French frontier. The French, meanwhile, were living in a fool's paradise. They had some grounds, it is true, for confidence; their new breech-loading rifle called the "chasse-pot" was a vast improvement on the Prussian "needle-gun." They had some advantage too in the deadly "mitrailleuse." But their organization was hopelessly at fault. Their numbers, when collected, fell short of the German by 100,000 men. Their reservists arrived late. Many had not been trained in the use of their new rifles. Even their very confidence betrayed them; and the only maps provided were maps of Germany. It was not these that would be wanted. While the French were thus concerned in grandiose schemes of paper strategy and in shouting "A Berlin!" the German corps were aligned in their position. On 6 August their southern army, acting in the neighbourhood of Strasbourg, fell on MacMahon at Wörth, and practically destroyed him. His scattered remnant fell back in rout towards Paris. Half-way to the capital he rallied it at Chalons; but in his crippled state he could only sit and watch the issue in the northern theatre. There round the formidable fortress town of Metz was concentrated the bulk of the French army. Bazaine was in command; but Napoleon's fatal influence (for he was there in person) hung like a mill-stone round his neck. On the news of MacMahon's defeat, but after days of perilous delay and indecision, the order was given for retreat. But it came too late. Von Moltke's dispositions had been as masterly as the French were incoherent. His troops had crept round Metz; and, as Bazaine

endeavoured to slip westward, they barred the way near the heights of Gravelotte. A tremendous battle followed. Bazaine was beaten, forced to fall back on Metz, and there besieged by the victorious German army. Between it and Paris lay now but the broken remnant of MacMahon. Prudence demanded that he should remain to shield the capital. But this would have been a plain confession that the war was lost. Madness prevailed; and against his better judgment MacMahon set forth to the succour of Bazaine. He did not march directly upon Metz, but moved up north through Rheims, and thence towards Stenay on the Meuse, hoping thus to throw the Germans off the scent. But they were already after him. Troops had been detached from the southern and central armies; and, when he reached the river, they were there. Little by little, by a succession of attacks, they shepherded him north, until at Sedan he found himself encircled by overwhelming numbers. His men fought bravely, as the jaws of the trap closed in; but on 1 September it was clear that all was over. Napoleon (who had at least the grace to remain loyally with his army) surrendered with 80,000 men. Bismarck himself was present, as with tears of bitter shame the miserable man acknowledged the ruin of his hopes and of his country.

The war was won; but the French would not admit it. Bazaine held on in Metz; yet his defence was so half-hearted that suspicions of his treason have often been entertained; and late in October the town was given up. Strasbourg after long privations suffered the same fate. At Paris meanwhile a grim tragedy was played. On the news of Napoleon's surrender at Sedan, the indignant citizens declared a new Republic; and under the leadership of Gambetta and Jules Favre the city had been put in a state of siege. Its ring defences were too powerful for assault; and the Germans had no choice but to sit down and wait. For four months of slow starvation the besieged held on; then, on 30 January, 1871, came the end, and the enemy marched in triumph through the Paris streets. The victor's terms were harsh. Bismarck did not believe in sentiment,

where empires were at stake ; and thanks to her Emperor's folly France had brought her punishment on her own head. She was compelled to pay an indemnity of £200,000,000—a sum which, seeing it paid with ease within three years, the Germans much regretted having fixed so low. Alsace and Lorraine, which had been a part of France since their annexation by Louis XIV, were ceded to Germany. Though Bismarck protested that this went beyond his wish, it was conceived in the spirit he had taught. And indeed, in more ways than one, the victory set a seal on his life's work. The war had been a crowning proof of Prussia's powers of leadership ; and now it appeared that the States of Southern Germany were no less eager than the north to acknowledge her as head. A fortnight before the capitulation of Paris, their representatives had waited on King William in his head-quarters at Versailles. There, in the palace of the old French kings, the union was accomplished. Germany was declared henceforth to be one realm—and at its head was William Hohenzollern, no longer "King" of Prussia, but "Emperor" now from the Danube to the sea. They little dreamt—these homely, musical, peace-loving folk of Baden, Bavaria, and the rest—to what unlovely engine of militant autocracy they had henceforth hitched their car. Germany, indeed, had found unity at last—but she had bartered away her soul.

England had watched these doings on the Continent with a spectator's interest, but with varying sympathy. Towards the cause of Italian independence she had naturally been partial ; and short of material help she had done all in her power to forward it. When the war was over and Garibaldi came to London, he had been fêted as a hero ; and Italian gratitude, such as it was to be, had not been wholly unearned. Over the Franco-Prussian duel, however, British public opinion went curiously astray. France got little sympathy upon this side the Channel, where Louis Napoleon had always been regarded as an inconvenient, and perhaps a dangerous, neighbour. During the late fifties there had been talk of a French war and even scares of an invasion.

To meet such imagined peril the "Volunteer" movement had been started, and upwards of two hundred thousand private citizens had been enrolled in this amateur militia. Napoleon's name was naturally unpopular; and Englishmen were not sorry at the last to see his fall. For Germany, on the other hand, we kept a warm corner in our heart. The Prince Consort was a German; and his presence here had done much to commend his country's cause. There was now a growing tendency to look on our Teutonic cousins as a kindred race. Carlyle had taught us to admire their sterling qualities; their literature and music were beginning to be studied and admired. There was soon, in fact, to be a regular cult for all things German, and the Briton, always ready to patronize success, came to think of the matchless efficiency which had won the war with France as something to emulate, but not as yet to fear.¹ So quickly and so strangely do international relations shift and change. Few then would have believed that in the next great struggle we should be fighting against Germany with France.

¹ British sympathy, however, shifted somewhat towards the French, when Prussia's ruthless terms had been disclosed.

CHAPTER XII

THE CONSERVATIVE IDEAL

WHILE the world without was thus busy with the making and marring of great empires, and loud with the tumult of embattled hosts, England pursued in contented isolation the prosperous tenour of her way. The remainder of the century was for her no heroic or agitating period. She waged no wars except against the ill-matched arms of restless savages. She knew no such burning issues, no such days of painful crisis, as had vexed her peace in the preceding age. The struggles of 1832 and 1847 had been decisive. The twofold triumph of political reform and of economic freedom had broken down the barriers, and the unchecked flood of democratic progress flowed onward in a smoother stream. The masses, no longer starving, forgot their grievances of Corn Law days; and bit by bit they too were to be admitted to a participation in the country's government. In other words, these were years, not of revolutionary upheaval, but of patient building, "line upon line, line upon line, here a little, and a little there." The foundations of England's future had in fact been firmly laid; and henceforward there was question only of the style which the upper edifice should take. There were two rival sets of architects—the Conservatives and the Liberals; but between the alternative policies of these the People were now judge.

It is no easy matter to acquire the habit of self-government. The man in the street is slow to use real discernment in the casting of his vote; and too often even now he will follow an ingrained prejudice or a specious party cry

in preference to the dictates of sound sense. Nevertheless the English people started with a certain natural aptitude for politics. They had long been accustomed to the theory, if not to the practice, of representative ideals. Education too was spreading; more schools were being built; and in 1876 attendance was declared compulsory for every child. Meantime the newspaper did valuable service by instructing the public in the problems of the day. Our Press was already a well-established and efficient institution. No country in Europe could boast its counterpart; and its influence was the greater for the high sense it entertained of its own responsibility; for the days were not yet come when circulation was the one thought uppermost in the editorial mind; nor was self-advertisement considered a more important matter than the dissemination of the daily news. Papers of course took sides, as they do now; but for the most part they were enlightened partisans, willing to acknowledge an error or even, if need were, to criticize the conduct of their favourites. The "Times," in particular, was a most outspoken and independent critic of political affairs.¹ Delane, its editor, was the friend and confidant of many Ministers; but he never scrupled to denounce the Government in power, if he thought its policy mistaken; and both in and out of England he spoke with an authority which few members of the Cabinet could equal. Political sympathies, in fact, no longer ran in narrow, predestined grooves of social prejudice. In the old days, as we have seen, the son inherited his opinions along with his father's factory or acres; and a man's vote was almost invariably conditioned by his education or his class. Now, however, like "The Times" newspaper, a large part of the community was becoming more and more independent in its outlook. Still, no doubt, there were inveterate Tory squires who would

¹ Even more independent and detached was the attitude of "Punch." Nothing reflects so well the better class opinion of Victorian times as the weekly cartoons of Sir John Tenniel. Their humour does not conceal the serious vein beneath; and as comment even on the most vital issues, they seldom miss the mark.

continue to vote Conservative till the end of time, and radical enthusiasts who would sooner far have died than desert the Liberal party. But the bulk perhaps of middle-class opinion was not convincedly in favour of one side or the other; rather were men inclined to note the shortcomings of the party which was "in" and therefore to vote at an election for the party which was "out." So changes of Ministry were apt to be more frequent. The pendulum swings from side to side with a regularity unknown in earlier days; and Liberals and Conservatives appear and disappear upon the Treasury Bench, like the puppet figures of the gentleman and lady in the cheap bric-à-brac barometer.

The fact is that in latter-day politics there has not been the same clean-cut divergence of opinion that had existed between the Tories and the Whigs. *Their* battle had been fought and finished; and the old Whig battle-cry of "the Individual's Liberty" had lost much of its significance with victory. One cannot go on fighting for a cause which has been won; and the individual Englishman was now as free as he could wish. The State no longer dictated his beliefs, nor restricted his expression of opinion, nor even, since 1847, controlled his trade. Whiggery, in short, was out of date; and the Liberal Party, though heir to its "individualist" tradition, grew gradually less tender about the Individual's Rights and more friendly to the opposite principle of State Control. So, generally speaking, it became the endeavour of both Liberals and Conservatives alike to make the people happier and better, not through liberty, but through *compulsion*, enacting laws which, for example, compelled all children to attend a school, or all employers to render compensation for accidents befalling their employees. By neither party was State interference regarded any longer as an evil; by the Conservatives, following in the footsteps of the Tories, it had always been regarded as a good. Both parties therefore, though in different ways, had reforms and improvements to propose. The Conservatives were more tentative and cautious, eager to "conserve"

what was most valuable in the traditions of the past, and ready only for such changes as appeared to be in harmony with these. The Liberals, on the other hand, looked forward and not back, preferring to aim at an ideal in the future rather than to rest upon the traditions of the past, and shaping their policy according to a noble, but somewhat vague, conception of what a true democracy should be. Both, as was natural, kept their eyes on the electorate, considering what measures would appeal to their supporters and win them popularity at future polls. Vote-catching, it cannot be denied, is a sore temptation to the modern politician; yet in a sense also it is of the very essence of democracy. The public is seldom fully conscious of its needs, until it finds them either satisfied or flouted. If therefore a Government is at all to represent the people, it must endeavour to interpret these unexpressed desires and anticipate the country's wants by timely legislation. To a large degree, therefore, the genius of a democratic Minister consists in gauging accurately the direction in which the nation's mind will move; and success or failure in this difficult task will explain to some extent the rise and fall of the various governments and premiers during the period with which we are about to deal. Set in brief, the changes were as follows. Soon after the death of Palmerston in 1865, the Liberals lost the confidence of Parliament; and the Conservatives, though without a true majority and so dependent for support on other sections of the House, took office in their stead. This Ministry lasted but a bare two years; and at the General Election of 1868 the Liberals were once again returned to power. They held it through a busy period of six years; and then, for the first time since the disastrous party-split over the Corn Laws, the Conservatives came by their own. From 1874 they governed with a handsome majority until in 1880 their opponents once more regained the upper hand; but with that we may leave the chequered phases of this see-saw struggle and turn to the consideration of each party's aims, failures, and achievements. Let the Conservatives stand first.

The story of the evolution of the Conservative ideal is, strange to say, the story not of blue-blooded aristocrats or fox-hunting squires, but of the Jew, Benjamin Disraeli, promoted in 1876 to be Earl of Beaconsfield. One starts at the anomaly ; that an eccentric man of letters of alien blood should have succeeded in rallying a group of rebellious Tories against their master Peel was queer enough ; but that for the twenty years which followed he should have kept his hold, and become the accredited champion of a party yielding to none in pride of birth and station, this seems to touch on the miraculous. Sheer force of personality accomplished much ; but fortune, too, assisted. The Conservative party were not, upon the whole, a very brilliant lot. There was a dearth of genuine talent, an absence of large ideas ; and Disraeli stood a head and shoulders above the common herd. His acute instinct for Parliamentary strategy and his great gift of sarcastic repartee made him an ideal leader of an Opposition ; and during the period of their temporary eclipse the Conservatives soon found that they could not do without him. During Lord Derby's two short-lived administrations of 1852 and 1858 Disraeli had already served as Chancellor of the Exchequer. His character had then asserted itself strongly ; and now, when in 1866 Lord Derby resumed office, there could be little question which was the more important person of the two. As leader of the Commons Disraeli shouldered a responsibility of no light order. The Conservatives had a bad reputation to live down. They had resisted the nation's will over the Reform Bill. Many of them had selfishly upheld the hated Corn Laws. Their most cherished principles had suffered on both issues an irretrievable defeat ; and, when now they entered upon office, they scarcely knew for what their party stood. Yet, before they vacated it just two years later, they had caught the inspiration of a new political faith ; they had learnt that Conservatism could transcend the narrow interest of a single class and could represent a great national ideal. This was Disraeli's work ; and the

explanation of the Jew's success is perhaps the most fascinating puzzle of modern politics.

It would be idle to deny that in his early years Disraeli was something of a hypocrite. He had posed as a Tory, because he saw the opportunity to cut a figure; and his eloquent championship of the landed aristocracy was little better than a brilliant *tour de force*. Yet the strangest thing about the man was this: when once an idea had seized hold upon his mind and kindled the fire of his imagination, it became a part of him. He would throw it into the shape of some arresting clear-cut phrase; and, by the time he had repeated it on four or five occasions, he believed it heart and soul. Of the essential truth of his Conservative principles, Disraeli was by now as utterly convinced as if he had been born a titled landowner or the Duke of Wellington himself. Yet perhaps after all it was no mere accident that Disraeli's mind should have run in this direction. The glamour of the past appealed in a high degree to his oriental instinct for romance. The picturesque dignity and time-hallowed prestige of our English aristocracy stirred his imagination; he loved the antique pomp of ceremonial and the finery and decorations of court dress. He would have been a Royalist, had he lived under the Stuarts; had he served Elizabeth, he would have been a second Raleigh. To him there was no sense of affectation about such sentiments, and his heart swelled with honest British pride when he spoke of "our ancient heritage," "our immemorial throne," or "the good old cause." Wholly in keeping with this character was his conception of the function of the monarchy. We must have "a real crown," he said; and, unlike Palmerston, he never forgot that a Minister is the servant of the sovereign. Queen Victoria was living at this time a life of strict seclusion. In 1861 her husband, the Prince Albert, had died of typhoid fever. Though of foreign birth, his lofty character, shrewd sense, and zeal for England had gradually dispelled suspicion and endeared him to the people, and his death caused sincere regret. But it broke Victoria's heart. For nearly twenty years after the

sad event she stubbornly refused to be consoled or even to appear at all in public. But, while she nursed her sorrow in the privacy of the palace, she pluckily maintained her interest in national affairs. She liked to keep in touch with all that happened; and Disraeli treated her wish with an obsequious deference. Flattery was an art of which none was greater master; compliments came readily to his tongue; and in the case of royalty we have it on his own confession that he "laid it on with a trowel." Victoria was not duped; but she did not resent the attitude; and her personal relations with her favourite Minister were close and intimate. At the palace he was always most cordially received; and the interchange of letters upon affairs of State was accompanied by curious little tokens of esteem. At the end of a dispatch, written at the time of a big crisis, Victoria adds, "The Queen sends some camelias grown in the open air and primroses for Lord Beaconsfield." "Lord Beaconsfield," comes the answer, "is deeply touched by Your Majesty's gracious kindness in deigning to send him some flowers from Your Majesty's island home. Truly he can say they are 'more precious than rubies,' coming as they do and at such a moment from a sovereign whom he adores." Language of this sort is apt to sound extravagant to our prosaic ears; but there is small doubt Disraeli meant or thought he meant it. Your true Conservative observes a proper reverence for the person of his sovereign.

Contradictory as it seems upon first sight, the most important measure of the new Conservative administration was an extension of the franchise. ✓Talk of another Reform Bill had been much in the air of late. The Liberals had not forgotten the success of 1832; and though they fell from office in the attempt to pass it, they had propounded a fresh measure. Once, over the repeal of the Corn Laws, Disraeli had twitted Peel with "having caught the Whigs bathing and made off with their clothes." Yet this is precisely what he was doing now; having stolen an idea from the Liberals he used it as his own; and indeed this

Conservative measure was to go a great deal further than did theirs.¹ By the Reform of 1832, it will be remembered, the vote had been accorded to borough householders of £10 annual rating. Now it was proposed to give *every* urban householder a vote, and to reduce the limit for county householders from £50 to £12.¹ To put it in plain English, this meant the enfranchisement of perhaps a million persons, and these not decent middle-class respectabilities, but horny-handed labourers and artisans. About such a measure qualms very naturally arose among the rank and file of the Conservatives. That it was a bold experiment, "a leap in the dark," Lord Derby himself admitted; and Disraeli's chief business, as he afterwards declared, was to "educate his own party." Nevertheless, by infinite tact and conciliatory handling, he got the measure through. For him it was a wonderful triumph of personality; yet how are we to square it with the Conservative principles he preached? If the party believed in anything at all, they believed in government by gentlefolk, and not by artisans; and the extension of democracy by a one-time Tory Cabinet must seem, to say the least of it, a contradiction in terms. Partly, no doubt, this paradox may be explained by a not unnatural nor unpardonable anxiety to forestall their opponents and gain the credit for this act of grace. "Don't you see," said Lord Derby, "how we have dished the Whigs?" But there was more in it than this. The motive at the bottom of Disraeli's mind was true-blue Conservative. He saw that through the centuries the working class had normally accepted the nobility and gentry as their leaders; he believed that their reverence for tradition was still strong; and he was prepared to prophesy that, once they had the vote, they would use it in the interest of the "good old cause." Precisely, therefore, as the Whigs had won adherents by extending the franchise to the middle class, so now the Conservatives

¹ In 1858 the Conservatives had already drafted a Reform Bill much more on the Liberal lines. The idea, however, of launching out more boldly was only arrived at during the course of the 1866 Ministry.

might swell their own majority by winning the alliance of the workers. It was a bold speculation; and, if it did nothing else, it showed this much at least, that Disraeli's party was prepared to trust the people, and to place the national interest before the interest of their class. In the long run, too, the prophecy was justified; for in the south especially the newly enfranchised workers have given the Conservatives almost continuous support. But in the immediate issue Disraeli was cheated of his hope. Six months after the passage of the Bill, Lord Derby resigned, a victim to the gout; and for the vacant premiership one choice alone was possible. So the dream of Disraeli's ambition was fulfilled. "Yes," he said proudly to his political friends, "I have climbed at last to the top of the greasy pole"—but he was not to stay there long. The Conservatives had never commanded a true majority in Parliament; and the attack of the Opposition soon became so dangerous that the new Prime Minister was forced to take refuge in an appeal to the electorate. From this indeed he did not shrink. He trusted to the gratitude of the newly enfranchised masses, and counted on the vote of the "Conservative working man" to pull him through. But the working man was, for this time at any rate, neither Conservative nor grateful; and he let Disraeli down. The Liberals were returned with a big majority; and the net result of the great "leap in the dark" was to land its hopeful authors in the ditch.

Yet Disraeli struggled on, undaunted by discouragement; and six years later he had his due reward. The Liberal cause had not prospered in the interval. Gladstone was thought to have made a thorough mess of foreign policy; and the character of his domestic legislation had not increased his popularity at home. At the General Election of 1874 the country showed its anger. The pendulum swung back with a vengeance; and the Conservatives came in with the first genuine majority they had enjoyed since Corn Law days. "They are in for years," said their crest-fallen opponents; and the prophecy was true. Disraeli's day had come—but it had come late—perhaps too late.

The Jew was already in his seventieth year; the buoyancy of his youth and the vigour of his prime were gone; even he himself was conscious of the shadow which age casts. Yet, so long as his brain could think, ideas came flowing from it. He was still the master-mind among a powerful Cabinet. Maturer wisdom gave him a firmer grasp; he knew he had the country at his back; and now at any rate he meant to show them what a "Tory Democracy" could do. With the aid of two most capable lieutenants, Richard Cross and Stafford Northcote, he undertook a series of great measures to improve the conditions of the working class. Such improvement was very sorely needed. The great industrial towns had sprung up all too rapidly; no forethought had been given to their building or their planning; slums of the most horrible description abounded everywhere; the wretched inmates were crowded like sardines, several families often living in one room, while the actual conditions under which they worked were often scandalous. Disraeli was following in Lord Shaftesbury's footsteps and, therefore, in a sound Conservative tradition when he undertook to set such abuses right by legislation. The local authorities in the larger towns were empowered to pull down houses which were unfit for habitation and to build others in their place. Sanitation was scientifically studied; and a new Factory Act was passed, whereby the regulation of working hours and factory conditions was put upon a firm and settled basis. Nor was this all; for Disraeli realized that, much as the State might help him by such protective legislation, the working man could never really prosper till he could help himself. He saw, what indeed was fast becoming evident, that the Trades Unions must be given a fair chance. Hitherto, though the existence of such bodies was legalized by the Act of 1825, their effectiveness had been seriously curtailed by the nature of the law. Peaceful collaboration and debate about their policy was indeed permitted them; but, if they went so far as to call an actual strike, the Trades Unions became liable at once to prosecution for "conspiracy." In other words, to take joint action about

wages, even if no violence should be done, was a crime against the law; and thus, whenever a dispute arose, the masters had the whip-hand of the men. Such a restriction was, of course, most galling to the workers; but there were many strikes in spite of it; and during the early seventies the tension grew extreme. Wild doings were reported from the Midlands; and a certain saw-grinder, James Lindley by name, was mysteriously shot dead by an air gun for having infringed his Union rules. Public opinion was gravely exercised by this condition of affairs; and a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the whole relationship of employers and employed. The upshot was that in 1876 Disraeli's Government brought in a Bill which was to set the Trades Unions upon an entirely different footing. Henceforward their members were at liberty to strike, and the law was powerless on that score at least to touch them, unless they were guilty of committing, as a body, some act which in an individual would be accounted as a crime. This new-won privilege gave an immense stimulus to the so-called Labour movement. Within the next quarter of a century the membership of Unions rose to upwards of two millions. Strikes became more serious and more numerous; and, though this advance towards industrial freedom was sooner or later an inevitable step, yet one wonders if its author, had he foreseen the final issue, would have remained so certain of its Conservative intent. At the same time we can hardly doubt that he did well. At the very least he had redeemed his promise; and in five years, as an admirer put it, he had done more for the working class of England than the Liberals had in fifty.

But there remained yet another shaft in the Jew's quiver; and the most important contribution that he made to the Conservative ideal was concerned with things abroad, not things at home. Our foreign policy the public held to have been badly bungled by Gladstone's Liberal Ministry; and their apparent slackness had recently lost us much of our prestige. Continental powers had been allowed to flout our wishes, and even to cancel their treaty obligations without

leave. Our Colonies, certainly, had not as yet been valued as highly as they should have been; nor were Liberals alone in viewing them as a purposeless excrescence, the retention of which was a waste of energy and a drain upon our strength. Disraeli himself had in his day made light of their importance. But, as a Conservative, he was more naturally inclined to methods of strong government, though not after the perverse and fatal manner of Lord North which had lost us the very prize it was intended to retain. Indeed, there was more of Chatham than of Lord North in Disraeli's composition. He possessed imagination; there was nothing small or petty in his views; and perhaps the very accident of his birth was here a positive advantage; for the Jew is wont to have a cosmopolitan outlook and a width of imagination which are more rarely to be found in the insular views of the homebred Englishman. In any case, if Chatham thought, as they say, in terms of continents, Disraeli may be said to have thought in terms of the world. First, perhaps, of his own generation he conceived of England's mission as a double trust. Her Empire was destined, like the rule of Ancient Rome, to unite in one efficient, civilizing system the peoples of many countries, different creeds, and various races. But she was to be no tyrant mistress. Standing for freedom in her own native institutions, she was to hand on the precious heritage to her dominions; and so throughout the world would be spread the same traditions which already had made the English people what they were. In a famous speech delivered at the Guildhall towards the close of his career, Disraeli summed up his ideal in these words: "I know the citizens of London are not ashamed of the Empire which their ancestors created. I know that they will not be beguiled into believing that in maintaining their Empire, they may forfeit their liberties. One of the greatest of Romans, when asked what were his politics, replied '*IMPERIUM ET LIBERTAS*.' Empire and Liberty—that would not make a bad programme for a British Ministry,"—noble sentiments, indeed, and to his own contemporaries at least much less familiar than they are to us. But Disraeli's time was short

and he was old; and, though he sowed the seed of the Imperialist ideal, there was not much tangible result to show. Some few things, however, he was able to effect. It was upon his advice that the Queen assumed her title of Empress of India—a name well calculated to make a deep impression on the Oriental mind. It was he again who was responsible for our second intervention in Afghanistan and the check there administered to the designs of Russia. Anxiety for our communications with the East led him to one significant and far-sighted act of statesmanship. A dozen years before, in 1864 to be precise, a canal had been constructed through the Suez Isthmus. It had chiefly been the work of a French engineer called Lesseps; and, while nearly half the shares in the enterprise were vested in the “Khedive” or Mohammedan Governor in Egypt, the other half were exclusively retained in the hands of a French company. England had no share; and this was the more disastrous, because our Indian traffic was almost at once diverted from the old Cape route to this much more expeditious passage. Seeing the importance of Suez to ourselves, Disraeli watched his chance; and in 1875 the chance occurred. The Khedive’s treasury was bankrupt; and he was on the point of parting with his shares in the Canal to a French financial company, when a British agent was instructed to step in with a more tempting offer. On his own initiative (for Parliament was “up”) Disraeli undertook to make the deal. There was no time to be lost, if he was to cut the Frenchmen out; so, in the name of the Government, he borrowed £4,000,000 from the Jewish banker, Baron Lionel de Rothschild; and nearly a half-share interest in the great canal thus passed into our hands. The Liberals, of course, attacked him for this unauthorized procedure; but the country backed him up, and since then it has had good reason to be thankful for his promptitude and foresight. Disraeli soon followed the transaction up by sending a British representative to Egypt; a good understanding with the Khedive soon gave us an influence not a whit behind the French; and so was laid the basis of our eventual “Occupation” of the country, which

has been till now the prop and mainstay of our Empire in the East.

In Europe itself Disraeli too did much to redeem our shaken credit. Bismarck at the moment appeared to dominate the scene ; but it was soon made clear that, under a Conservative Government at least, England would truckle to no militarist alive. In 1875 the rapid recovery of France alarmed the Germans and they threatened a new war. Disraeli spoke out strongly ; and, with however ill a grace, Bismarck was compelled for once to knuckle down. The continental power, however, which gave us the most trouble, was not Germany, but Russia. As we have said above,¹ the ambitions of the Tsar led him in 1875 to support the revolution of the Balkan States against the Sultan's tyranny. This renewed menace of the aggrandizement of Russia was promptly, though not decisively, resisted. Disraeli issued a grave warning, and to show himself in earnest dispatched a British squadron up the Dardanelles. As we did not go so far as to declare war, this backing was not more than sufficient to save the Sultan's face ; and soon after, an arrangement was patched up whereby the revolted provinces became independent of the Turk. Its details, however, were not considered satisfactory by the other European powers ; a conference was summoned at Berlin to revise and countersign the settlement ; and Disraeli himself, though he was rising eighty, went out to represent our Government. This mission marked, perhaps, the zenith of his fame. Even Bismarck was impressed by his strong personality. "The old Jew, he's the man," was his curt, but telling comment ; and indeed it was the Jew's firm stand in the face of exaggerated Russian claims that brought the conference to its successful issue. On his return Disraeli received a great ovation ; but the fickle country soon showed that in its judgment our vigorous foreign policy had gone too far and the Government been too adventurous. At the heat of the crisis there had been plenty of enthusiasm ; and British pride had shown itself in unusually bellicose be-

¹ See p. 128.

haviour, of which the notorious music-hall ditty of the day was a somewhat crude reflection:—

We don't want to fight; but by Jingo, if we do,
We've got the ships, we've got the men, and we've got the money too.¹

But there was a foolish exaggeration about such mock-heroics; and, in the cooler fit that followed, the public came to realize how much we had been risking. At the General Election which was held in 1880 Disraeli was heavily defeated at the polls. He immediately resigned, a worn-out and in some ways a disappointed man. He died in the following year.

There is no stranger phenomenon in modern times than the career of this man, who began life as a self-advertising free-lance and ended it a public institution. His weaknesses were many; but the proof of his greatness lies in the impression he has made. His conception of a party which should combine respect for inherited tradition with a real enthusiasm for democratic progress laid the foundations of a new political creed. His vision of an Empire which should combine strength and unity with enlightenment and freedom has inspired the British nation with the sense of a new mission in the world. He was respected in his day, as few before or since; and his memory has long been kept alive by the regular observance of an anniversary—called "Primrose Day" after his favourite flower—an honour accorded, it is true, to some dozen others of his race, but to them for a reason curiously diverse.

¹ The song added a new word to our political vocabulary; and the term "Jingo" has come to be used of a man who advocates an extreme and bellicose Imperialism.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LIBERAL IDEAL

WHAT Disraeli was to the Conservatives, Gladstone was to the Liberals. In many ways indeed he was far more. No one nowadays can claim such hero-worship as he enjoyed during the seventies and eighties. Something in the upright tenour of his life, in the austere dignity of his carriage, and in the resounding periods of his rhetoric made a peculiar and unique appeal to the English middle classes; and in many a front parlour, hung in the place of honour above the mantelpiece, you may still see the portrait of the familiar features of the "Grand Old Man." The upper class, however, were of a different way of thinking; to them Mr. Gladstone was anathema. They could believe of him nothing that was good. Party malice leads often to crude judgments upon character; but here, as in Disraeli's case, we are faced with a singular political conundrum when we must answer how it was that a man whom half the country had agreed to idolize and had placed almost on the level of a saint was regarded by the other half, with just as much conviction, as a hypocritical self-interested cheat.

✓ Gladstone was a man of supreme and many-sided gifts. At Oxford he won first-class honours in Classics as well as Mathematics. His reading was extraordinarily wide. He was an erudite Homeric scholar. He was a close student of Theology; and his memory for detail was prodigious. Such a training served him in good stead when he came to be a Minister. He was never at a loss over the intricate contents of a budget; and it was a clever man who caught

him tripping over the clauses of a Bill. The more difficult a subject, the more he loved to grapple with its problems ; and his keen intellect was shown at its perfection in sifting and dissecting some tough point. In argument he was marvellously persuasive. To hear Gladstone was to be convinced. Read in cold blood, indeed, his speeches sound somewhat over subtle, and give the impression of trying to prove too much. But, heard on the platform, he was very different. There have been few more impassioned orators than Gladstone. He threw his whole soul into the words ; and, though the strength of his emotions never dulled his own power of thinking, it would carry his audience into transports of excitement. Such orators are apt to be narrow in their outlook and blind partisans of one idea. But Gladstone was anything but narrow. On most topics he kept his mind wonderfully open ; and one reason why he made such bitter enemies was that he so often changed it. Like Peel, whose political disciple he had been, he underwent many unpredictable conversions, and in his later years we find him going back on several principles which it had been his previous practice to uphold. In this Gladstone was typical perhaps of his party. Whether the Liberal ideal was of his making or whether the Liberal ideal had itself made him would be difficult to say ; but it is at least equally difficult to say what precisely the Liberal ideal was. To define Conservative principles is simple ; for they are built upon the experience of the past. But the Liberal, as we said, looks forward to the future and to what he considers the ultimate perfection of the State. Here there is clearly room for infinite speculation ; and if the Liberal may even change his mind about the goal at which he aims, much more is he apt to be in two opinions about the steps which lead to it. So the Liberal has been defined as a man who knows better what he does not want than what he does ; and of Gladstone himself there are different verdicts given. Some enthusiasts would say that he followed a star ; some that it was merely a will-o'-the-wisp, assuming according to the change of circumstance many various and highly inconsistent shapes.

Others again more cynically inclined would declare that all the while he was fumbling in the dark.

(For length of duration and for the eminence of his position Gladstone's career beat all Parliamentary records. He was four times Prime Minister, for twenty-eight years leader of his party, for sixty-three years a member of the House of Commons.) He began his political life as a Tory and a firm adherent of Peel, under whom, when but twenty-five years old, he first held office. At the crisis of the Corn Law controversy, he remained faithful to his master and refused to follow the discontented Tories into opposition. Then, after sitting on the fence for a space of fifteen years, he made his final choice between the parties and became a thorough-going Liberal. Under Palmerston he served as Chancellor of the Exchequer, making his name as a supreme master of finance; and after Palmerston's death the mantle of that last great Whig descended on his shoulders. He became Prime Minister in 1868 after Disraeli's famous failure at the polls. He was thrown out in 1874; but in 1880 he returned and held office for five years. Then came the momentous decision to propose Home Rule for Ireland, the split which it produced within the party, its discussion, and its ultimate defeat. Gladstone fell; and, though from 1892 to 1894 we find him once more at the head of a Liberal Ministry, he never again recovered the commanding position he had held in English politics. Two years before the ending of the century, in which he had been so dominant a figure, he died in his ninetieth year.

Gladstone's policy may be summed in the three words "Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform." It was a true Whig motto; and if of the three words we should except the last, it might well have stood for the policy of Walpole. Financial stability and commercial prosperity were in Gladstone's judgment the touchstone of a Ministry's success. He was, as we have said, a great financier, and his finance was learnt in the Free Trade School of the converted Peel. The work which Peel had begun he carried to completion, and reduced the number of taxes upon imports to the barest minimum.

He believed that the less a Government was spending and the fewer the taxes that were raised, the better it would be for every one. The Income Tax he intended, if possible, to abolish. In this he never succeeded; but once during the sixties (it is enough to make the modern Briton's mouth-water) he actually reduced it to 4d. in the pound. To accomplish this the strictest economy was needed, and Gladstone cut down ruthlessly the expenditure on public services. The Navy and Army were much reduced—his enemies said starved. In 1871, however, having witnessed the terrible collapse of France, the country grew alarmed about its military weakness; and Gladstone himself was compelled to mend his ways. Cardwell, his Minister for War, produced a scheme, whereby soldiers were enlisted upon shorter terms of service after the model of the efficient German army; while the total number of the forces of the Crown, Reservists and Volunteers included, was raised to nearly half a million. These changes were expensive; but despite of it Gladstone was always able to show a surplus on his budget, and even to pay off a considerable portion of the accumulated National Debt. Liberals of later days have come to see that public money can be more bountifully spent to great advantage, and that large expenditure on the people's health, efficiency, and education may prove in the long run a true economy. Nevertheless there is a golden mean in all things; and the extravagance of modern Ministers might find a useful antidote, if the wisdom and experience of this great financier were more often borne in mind.

But Gladstone was no mere miserly economist. It was natural he should believe, as all good Free Traders did, in leaving the individual to look after himself and to work out, if possible, his own salvation without interference from the State. But he equally believed in giving the individual a fair chance. Some share, for instance, in the country's government he held to be the right of every responsible and reputable citizen. He had already prepared the way, as we have seen, for an extension of the franchise, when Disraeli came along in 1867 and picked the idea as it were out of his

pocket. The actual credit for the Second Reform Bill was of course Disraeli's ; but, as some shrewd critic put it, the working man who thereby got the vote said "Thank you, Mr. Gladstone." And the day was soon to come when Gladstone too would play his proper part in the building up of our democratic constitution. In 1872 he passed a Bill by which votes were to be cast by Secret Ballot. The advantages of such a course were obvious ; bribery or intimidation by influential candidates became less possible ; and the people's liberty to exercise its judgment was rid of all illegitimate constraints. Finally, by a Third Reform Bill passed in 1884, Gladstone extended the franchise to the agricultural labourer, excluded in Disraeli's Bill by the £12 county limit. At the same time, to counterbalance the preponderant numbers of the rural population, he arranged for a readjustment of the seats, taking their members from the smaller county boroughs and giving them to the large industrial towns. Meanwhile Gladstone had found many opportunities of improving the condition of the masses. Nor did he shrink from using State compulsion, if it seemed in the true interests of the folk. He passed a fresh Bill for regulating mines ; another for the institution of Bank holidays ; a third compelling masters to compensate their workmen for injuries received in their employ. But by far the most beneficent of the numerous reforms standing to the credit of the Liberal leader was the Education Act of 1870. Since the beginning of Victoria's reign small grants amounting to a few thousand pounds a year had been made for education. But, though these sums were increased as time went on, there was still no national system. Schools such as there were had been provided by the various Churches and other philanthropic bodies ; some were kept by private teachers ; and what type of teachers this method might produce, the readers of "Nicholas Nickleby" will know. Gladstone recognized that the time had come for change, and that an illiterate democracy was an absurdity. To give the people control of State affairs and at the same time to leave them ignorant seemed useless ; and "now," as

a waggish politician put it, "we must educate our masters." So in 1870, under Gladstone's supervision, a Bill was introduced by Mr. Forster. Henceforth, wherever the existing schools were deemed inadequate, "public" schools were to be provided out of the local rates. Parents were to contribute to the expense of such establishments, up to a weekly maximum of 9d. The local authorities were empowered, but not commanded, to make attendance compulsory and truancy punishable by fine. This was the first great step towards a universal system. It remained (as was done in 1876) to exact compulsory attendance in all parts, then (as was done in 1891) to exempt the parent from the payment of all fees; and with that the national system of free elementary education was placed upon the footing which it occupies to-day. Thus Gladstone at a stroke gave a stimulus to democratic progress such as no amount of factory laws, mine acts, or housing regulations could ever have afforded. He had made it possible for the people of England to learn to think for themselves; and having thought to act. The results are with us still. Some doubtless have regretted Gladstone's step. Others have wisely questioned whether education has gone far enough. But the odd thing is that Gladstone's own contemporaries were on the whole against him. One clause in the Bill ruled out the teaching of any religious dogma in the national schools. The exemption, however, of the schools provided from the Established Church's funds aroused the jealousy of Nonconformists; and their annoyance was in part the cause of Gladstone's own undoing. The Nonconformists are chiefly to be found among the middle classes; and since the middle classes' vote, as a rule, controls the polls, their alienation was a serious matter. The result was seen in the election of 1874, when, despite all that he had done for the welfare of the people, the Liberal leader found his followers deserting him. By a decisive majority his party was thrown again from power.

For the six years following Gladstone was condemned to sit on the Opposition bench and watch his arch-enemy

Disraeli handling our affairs. There were tremendous passages of arms between them; and very evenly the two were matched. They had many points at issue, but perhaps the most important concerned our Foreign Policy. In domestic matters, as we have already seen, there was not much to choose between Conservatives and Liberals; but over Foreign Policy there was a sharp divergence in their views. Gladstone, as a rule, was not for meddling in other peoples' business; he believed that England would do best by keeping to herself; but if she meddled, then he, like all good Whigs and all good Liberals, was a fervent advocate of Liberty. A sentimental sympathy for struggling nationalities was one of the guiding principles of his career. In earlier days he had made Englishmen's blood boil by describing the prison cells in which the King of Naples confined the unhappy victims of his royal displeasure; and when in 1875 the Balkan States rebelled against the Turkish Sultan, Gladstone, unlike Disraeli, was on the rebels' side. The Turks, in their frantic efforts to hold down their Christian subjects, had recourse, as usual, to most violent measures. In Bulgaria they let loose upon the helpless peasants a savage horde of soldiers, known as the Bashi-Bazouks. Newspaper correspondents sent tidings home to England of the horrible massacres which had ensued; and in the somewhat exaggerated tale of these so-called "Bulgarian Atrocities" Mr. Gladstone found a useful weapon whereby to push home his point. He denounced Turkey on the platform. He wrote a pamphlet which was sold by tens of thousands; and the wave of indignation he aroused did much to dissuade the Government from intervening on the Turkish side. As we have seen, Disraeli kept the peace; and at the Congress of Berlin he effected some sort of compromise between the claim of Russia to control the Balkans and our own traditional undertaking to support the Turk. Whether his view was right or wrong, it was the prevailing view of our nineteenth century statesmen. Gladstone stood alone in his denunciation of the Turk; and, in his enthusiasm for the cause of the downtrodden Christian

States, he completely disregarded the important rôle played by the Turkish Empire in preventing Russian access to our own Empire in the East. "Cosmopolitan critics, friends of every country but their own," was Disraeli's sneering jibe; and there was a certain truth in it. The Liberal politician, wrapt away among the clouds of his ideals, is sometimes apt to overlook the practical realities which lie before his feet. The necessities of action may bring him down to earth; but, while he endeavours to square his lofty principles with awkward facts, he hesitates and does not know his mind; or, knowing it, he lacks the resolution to make good.

When in 1880 Disraeli retired from office and Gladstone once again took up the reins, circumstances were soon destined to arise which would reveal this Liberal weakness in a strong and none too creditable light. The trouble came in Egypt. There, since Disraeli's purchase of the Suez shares, a policy of intervention had been slowly forced upon us. The Khedive's finances had gone from bad to worse; and in 1879 a certain Captain Baring, better known by his later title of Lord Cromer, was sent out from England at the Khedive's own request to put things straight. His presence there worked marvels; but the natives much resented such foreign interference, and in 1881 an insurrection under Arabi Bey had turned the country upside down again. The bloodthirsty massacre of some European residents had soon forced the British Government to act. Our fleet bombarded the coast town of Alexandria; and with some troops brought up from India Sir Garnet Wolseley defeated the rebels at Tel-el-Kebir and occupied the country. Such a step, of course, was contrary to Gladstone's Liberal principles. The requirements of our Empire or the commercial importance of the great canal did not appeal to him; and, rather than trample on the sacred rights of Egyptian nationality, he was determined to evacuate the country as soon as ever it seemed safe. He little guessed what troubles were in store. While the rebellion of Arabi was taking place in Egypt, the Sudan too was up in arms against the Khedive's Government. A

fanatical prophet, who proclaimed himself the Mahdi or Mohammedan Messiah, had stirred the savage tribesmen to an ecstasy of fervour and mad hate; and soon they had driven the Egyptian garrison into the fortress of Khartoum. A British officer sent with a native force to its relief was overwhelmed and butchered. What was to be done? Sir Garnet Wolseley advised the retention of Khartoum and the evacuation of all country to the south of it. Lord Cromer favoured the evacuation of the whole Sudan. The British Cabinet, and Gladstone not the least, were in a quandary, unwilling to dispatch an expedition to Khartoum, yet fearing the disgrace of abandoning the town. But in the winter months of 1884 a ray of light appeared. There was then in England a certain remarkable individual of the name of Charles George Gordon. Half religious eccentric, half military genius, Gordon had led a life of strange adventure in distant continents. He had commanded a native army for the Chinese Government, receiving the title of "General" for his pains. He had explored the religious sites of Palestine; and, above all, for six years he had governed single-handed the Khedive's province of the south Sudan. Here was just the man for the new trouble with the Mahdi. His knowledge of the native was unequalled; the magic influence he wielded in the East was positively uncanny; and if anyone could work the miracle of setting things to right, then it was he. The desperate Liberal Cabinet clutched at the straw; and the long and short of it was that Gordon was sent out in the early months of spring to accomplish the evacuation of Khartoum. Those were his instructions; but they were not instructions which appealed to Gordon's mind. To him evacuation appeared a double error, a sad disaster for the Sudanese themselves and a blot on British fame. Once arrived within the town (which was not as yet beleaguered), he reported that the town could quite easily be held, and telegraphed to Lord Cromer that he was out "to smash the Mahdi." The peaceful governor of Egypt was at this profoundly shocked, and from that time forward he had but one idea, to get this

troublesome fire-eater away out of Khartoum before it was too late. It was easier said than done. Not merely did the man in question refuse point-blank to come, but Khartoum had in the interval been laid under close siege, and an expedition would clearly now be needed to assist the withdrawal of the garrison. Mr. Gladstone, however, with his mind firmly set on his ideals, refused to see the necessity for military measures. "These people," he said, "are struggling to be free;" and it was not for a Liberal Government to intervene against an infant nationality. But the Liberal Government's views were not the views of England, which watched all these events with grave concern. The plight of Gordon was daily growing desperate; the Mahdi's army was pressing Khartoum hard; by the end of April the very wires were cut. Thus left in the dark, the public's anxiety increased. In May a fund was started for sending a relief force to Khartoum; and there was a huge meeting of protest in Hyde Park. At length Lord Hartington, the War Minister, threatened to resign unless help were sent to Gordon; and Gladstone, fighting to the last against a policy he loathed, was finally compelled to yield. On 26 August Wolseley received orders to set sail; on 9 September he landed in Egypt; and a British force ten thousand strong was prepared for the march south. Meanwhile Gordon was sitting on the roof of the palace at Khartoum scanning the horizon through a telescope. In September he sent some steamers down the Nile with a few white residents aboard; but he himself stuck loyally to his post, stipulating merely that the relief force should be quick. On 10 December there remained but a fortnight's provisions in the town; and of the arrival of the relief there was no sign. Gordon occupied his leisure in keeping a crazy sort of diary and in writing farewell letters home. With the new year a rumour came to the now starving garrison that the British army was not far away. On the 28th of January that army arrived within sight of the town; but the town itself was in the Mahdi's hands and Gordon dead. . . . Mr. Gladstone lived down, as best he could,

the odium of this tragic episode and ordered the evacuation of the whole Sudan. For the next twelve years the country was given up to anarchy. Then in 1896 Lord Kitchener marched south, in 1898 defeated the Mahdi at Omdurman, and thus at a blow restored the British credit and the country's peace. But for this no thanks were due to Mr. Gladstone or his Liberal principles; for by then other views prevailed.

"If a boy at Eton," Gordon wrote during the siege, "had behaved as the British Government has done, I *think* he would be kicked; and I am *sure* he would deserve it." Egypt had indeed showed Gladstone at his worst; and the disaster made him more unpopular than ever with upper-class society; but it was over a country nearer home than the Sudan that he committed what in their eyes was his unforgivable sin. That country was Ireland.

If we have said little about Ireland in the foregoing pages, it is not because these years had for her been uneventful or because she had figured little in the thoughts of Englishmen. On the contrary, she had been a thorn in the side of every Government, Conservative or Liberal, since the day in 1800 when the ill-fated "Union" had been accomplished by the younger Pitt. From that mistaken policy sprang a century and more of misery and unrest. Agitation never for one moment ceased; and the sole remedy which British Governments provided was one which merely served to aggravate the malady—repression. Yet British Governments were not the only enemy to Ireland's peace. To the discontent which human selfishness began, Nature set the finishing touch; and the real outstanding landmark of the century was the famine of 1847. That year, as we have seen, the potato crop failed utterly, and the peasants, wholly dependent upon this one precarious root, were doomed. Hundreds of thousands died. In some districts corpses littered the roadways. Nothing which human stomachs could conceivably digest was left untouched; and women trooped in hundreds to the farms to receive their repulsive dole of bullock's blood. What public or

private charity could do was done. Soup-kitchens were provided, "relief works" set on foot. At one time three million persons were supported on rations from the Government; but these were wholly inadequate to meet their need; and even the survivors came out from the ordeal mere feeble shadows of their former selves. The famine left the land completely ruined, the people disconsolate and soured. Though England had shown at the crisis an unwonted generosity, she got small thanks; and Ireland's traditional hatred of the tyrant country was yet further embittered by this ghastly memory. So the struggle for freedom continued unabated; and in 1848—the year of revolutions—the feud came once more to a head. Daniel O'Connell's restraining hand was gone. He had never recovered influence after his imprisonment by Peel; and the "Young Ireland" party which had refused his leadership now took their orders from less balanced minds. A group of youthful journalists and poets gathered round a man named Smith O'Brien; and in 1848, seeing Europe in an uproar, they rushed into mad revolt. It was a brief and ludicrous fiasco. A few foolish peasants joined them; and at Ballingarry an attack was made on a contingent of police. There was an inglorious scramble in a cottage garden, and within ten minutes the "Battle of Widow McCormack's Cabbage Patch" was over. O'Brien was arrested, sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered in the good old style, but eventually transported to Australia. The "Young Ireland" movement went out; and the torch of liberty was now to be carried on by other less worthy, but not less reckless hands.

One result of the great famine had been a wholesale emigration to America. Within a few years the prospect of better things across the water had tempted nearly a million persons to leave home; and little by little the population of the island dwindled until at the end of the century it stood at barely a half of what it was at the beginning. The emigrants, however, when they reached the United States did not forget the country of their birth nor her

grievance against England ; and with their stalwart backing a new and dangerous conspiracy was set on foot. The "Fenians," as they called themselves, were not men to stick at violence ; and during the sixties a regular campaign of futile outrage was begun. In the United States a desperate band, some thousand strong, essayed the wild project of invading Canada. They were ignominiously repulsed. At Chester the conspirators undertook to raid the Castle and seize possession of its military stores ; but the stratagem missed fire. At Clerkenwell jail, where some Fenians were confined, a barrel of gunpowder was placed under the walls ; but the explosion, while wounding several score of innocent civilians, did little damage to the jail itself. At Manchester the Fenians attacked a prison-van and killed a police officer inside. Three who were taken in the act were hanged, and won for themselves the name of "martyrs" to the cause. Nor was Ireland herself tranquil. There a truceless war had been declared against the hated landlord class ; and all through the remainder of the century the tale of crime ran on. "Moonlighters" fired fatal shots through windows at the dead of night. Cattle were maimed or spirited mysteriously away ; and men who incurred the displeasure of the "Leaguers" were "boycotted" by all the neighbourhood. Such tactics made little real impression upon England. The public felt uneasy ; but they would not yield to threats. So the old misunderstanding gradually hardened into an obstinate, uncompromising hate ; and the Irish were regarded as an unmanageable race who could appreciate no argument but force. "England," said "The Times," "has Ireland at her mercy, and can now deal with her just as she pleases." Such was the attitude which generally prevailed. But there was another view. One great and penetrating intellect was striving to find a solution of this insoluble problem. Gladstone at any rate was not content to look on, while Ireland perished, without an effort to arrest the slow decay. He tried honestly to diagnose the cause of her distresses ; and, like a skilful doctor, sought the remedy by seeking to understand

the true roots of the disease. His approach to the problem was tentative and cautious. When he first took office as Prime Minister in 1868, the Fenian scare was at its height. Murder and crime were rampant; and he was compelled ere long to introduce a stern measure of repression, forbidding the use of fire-arms in the more dangerous districts, and empowering the police to make search in private houses or even arrest suspicious persons upon sight. But this was not for Gladstone, as it had been for other statesmen, the one and only antidote to Irish violence; and meanwhile he was endeavouring by constructive legislation to remove the underlying grievances which prompted it. The only tragedy of his attempt was that it failed just when success appeared to be in sight.

Ireland's troubles were in the main threefold; and Disraeli's famous summary expressed them well—"a starving people, an alien Church, and an absentee aristocracy." The first at any rate was painfully obvious; yet starvation was not a state of things which need have been. The country itself is naturally productive; and all that was required to turn poverty to plenty was to restore the Irish people to a settled frame of mind and to inspire them with fresh confidence and hope. It was therefore with the two remaining troubles that Gladstone undertook first to deal. The "alien Church" was a long-standing grievance. For, although the vast majority of Irishmen were Catholics, the official creed was still the Protestant—the creed of the small minority of Scottish and English settlers who in the course of previous centuries had been settled on the land. This Protestant supremacy was bitterly resented, and for many years it had caused deep unrest. O'Connell in his time had fought a sturdy battle to relieve his countrymen of the burden of tithe-payment. In 1838 his protests had been successful; and the responsibility of supporting the official Church's clergy had rightfully been shifted from the Catholic peasants, and placed thenceforth entirely on the landlord class who in the main were Protestants. Nevertheless the official Church remained—an object of bitter

hatred to nine Irishmen in ten and regarded with spiteful jealousy by the Roman Catholic priests. These were perpetually at feud against their rival; and they desired not merely to see it disestablished, but also (since it drew large revenues from Ireland) disendowed. The justice of such claims was manifest to Gladstone, who himself was a member of the High Church party and so the less unfriendly to the Catholic point of view; and at the opening of his Ministry in 1869 he determined to concede them. The Protestant Church in Ireland he severed altogether from its official connection with the State; and its endowments for the most part he took away from it, making them over to the use of schools and colleges or else to institutions of a charitable sort. Yet, if he fancied thus easily to pacify the Irish, he was very much mistaken. The Catholic priests rewarded the concession by redoubling their agitations and intrigues; and the immediate benefits of Mr. Gladstone's statesmanship were lost to sight in the fresh storms which now arose.

Far more serious than the religious grievance was the interminable feud about the land. That the majority of the natives had been deprived long since of all rights of ownership was bad enough; but since the famine of 1847 a new trouble had emerged. The landlords of earlier days had mostly settled down, though not invariably, to be good Irishmen and to treat their tenants with neighbourly regard. In the disastrous year, however, thousands and thousands of such landowners were ruined and forced to sell their land. The purchasers were men of a very different stamp. They did not buy to settle on the property, but solely to make money on the rents. For the most part they managed their estates from England; and, as was only natural, the tenants got no mercy from such "absentees." They were now asked extortionate figures for their land. On failure to pay rent they were ruthlessly evicted; and for improvements they had made upon the farms and buildings, no compensation whatever was allowed them. No wonder, therefore, that the landlords were unpopular or that their victims not infrequently took criminal revenge.

In 1870 Mr. Gladstone introduced a Bill to regulate such matters. It compelled the landlord to deal fairly with his tenants, to compensate them properly for improvements they had made, and to refrain from unjustifiable eviction. Yet, beneficent as the measure was, it did not go far enough. Landlords will still be landlords upon whatever terms; and greed will always find a way to circumvent the law. No remedy could be final which stopped short of re-establishing the native Irish as *owners* of their land; and in this the Bill of 1870 did not succeed. It is true that one clause held out to tenant farmers some prospect of purchasing their farms. But nothing came of it; for the fact is that Mr. Gladstone had done little more than tinker with the problem; and, although in 1881 he produced a further law fixing the tenants' rents at a fair price and giving them far greater security of tenure, he never really solved it. Ireland meanwhile was growing more unrestful; for, her appetite once whetted by such unforeseen concessions, she straightway demanded more; and there was now but one concession which would permanently satisfy her need.

The repeal of the Act of Union and the revival at Dublin of a Home Rule Parliament remained throughout these various agitations the true goal of Ireland's hope. One weapon too she still possessed, which hitherto she had strangely failed to use. She sent her representatives to Westminster; and the hundred Irish members in the House of Commons were numerous enough to make their presence felt; yet since O'Connell's day at any rate they had accomplished next to nothing. Irish statesmanship seemed a thing of the past. In 1875, however, a new force appeared among them—the personality of Charles Stewart Parnell. Parnell was no Celtic firebrand of Daniel O'Connell's stamp, but the dour, level-headed son of an Irish Protestant, with a genius for organization and the command of men. He was determined to extort from England the concession of Home Rule, but he meant to win his object, as alone he realized it could be won, by constitutional and legal methods. At times, indeed, he sailed very near the wind and laid

himself open to the charge of fomenting crime. The "Land League" which he started in 1879 was nothing short of a national conspiracy against one class. It aimed at making the landlords' life impossible; and the idea was one to which the Irish warmed afresh; from peaceful "boycott" it was an easy step to outrage, and before long the movement spread beyond the leader's power to check it. A strong "Coercion Act" was passed to stamp out violence; and Parnell himself was actually arrested and lodged for a period in Kilmainham jail. Pledged to exert his influence in restoring peace and order, he was presently released; but within a week a terrible outrage had occurred which gave his cause an unforeseen set-back. In the May of 1882 Lord Frederick Cavendish, the new Chief Secretary, had just arrived in Dublin; he and his Under Secretary, a Mr. Burke, were strolling one evening across Phoenix Park when they were brutally set upon and murdered. This irresponsible act of a small gang of conspirators startled and horrified the world. British fury rose to boiling-point, and all chance of reasonable settlement seemed lost. Yet Parnell weathered the storm. Some years later an attempt was made to prove his acquiescence in the crime. The "Times" published a facsimile copy of a letter in his hand, declaring that "Burke had got no more than his deserts." The letter proved, however, to be an audacious forgery, the work of an ex-Fenian of the name of Pigott, who wrote a full confession of his guilt, fled to the Continent, and committed suicide. Thus Parnell's character was satisfactorily cleared; and meanwhile his popularity in Ireland had made enormous strides. True to the Kilmainham pledge, he had discountenanced all crime and was fighting his battle, in the proper constitutional manner, across the floor of Parliament. There his party of Home Rulers soon made its presence felt. They obstructed all such business as did not refer to Ireland. By every familiar trick of Parliamentary stratagem, they contrived to make themselves a thorough nuisance; and in 1885 their vote was largely instrumental in the overthrow of Gladstone. A General Election followed; and

Parnell's party came back to Westminster more numerous and more bellicose than ever. But Mr. Gladstone, too, very soon came back to power; and, what was more essential, he came back *converted*. In 1886 he introduced for the first time a Bill for the granting of Home Rule to Ireland.

Long and loud were the denunciations with which this famous measure was received. His enemies declared that Mr. Gladstone was simply yielding to intimidation. Lust for power, they said, was the Liberal leader's weakness; and, as the Liberal Ministry was dependent for its tenure on the support of Irish votes, this was a naked subterfuge to maintain itself in office. Such criticisms were more spiteful than well founded. Mr. Gladstone's conversion was not the matter of a moment. For many years he had pondered in his secret heart upon this bold solution of the Irish problem; nor could mere love of power have driven him at the age of seventy-seven to stake his whole repute on such a venture. It was a brave plunge; but it was fatal. For, contrary to his hopes, it split his party. Ninety-three Liberals—the very flower of his adherents—joined the ranks of the "Unionist" opposition pledged to support the "Union" at all costs. As a result of their secession the Bill itself was thrown out in the House of Commons by a margin of thirty votes; and, when Gladstone once again appealed for the country's verdict at a new election, the answer was decisive. The Unionists came in with an immense majority; and for twenty years the Liberal Party was to all intents and purposes extinguished.

Such was the tragic end of Parnell's great crusade. He had failed to convince England, and even at home he was soon to lose his influence. His fall was due to an injudicious lapse from moral rectitude. In 1890 he was accused of making love to the wife of one Captain O'Shea; a divorce suit being brought, he made no effort to defend it; and the disgrace of this disclosure broke the spell of his authority. He struggled on; but died in 1891 a discredited and disappointed man. Gladstone meanwhile had not abandoned hope. In the year after Parnell's death he regained power

for a brief period, and returned to the attack. Once more he was dependent upon the Irish vote, and once more he attempted to pass a Home Rule Bill. He actually succeeded in pushing it through the Commons; but it met with overwhelming resistance in the House of Lords, where it was finally defeated by four hundred votes. Gladstone retired, to die some five years later full of vigour to the last. His astonishing career had ended, so it seemed, in an astonishing misjudgment of the British character. Yet time has proved that England and not he was in the wrong. How much of misery and strife and rancour might then have been avoided by a timely acceptance of his policy, we now know to our bitter cost. But England's choice was made. Home Rule for the while was dead; and henceforward, whatever policy we might pursue towards Ireland, it was firmly based on the retention of the Union. In one point, however, the "Unionist" Government succeeded where even Gladstone failed. After the first Home Rule Bill and the Liberal overthrow Mr. Balfour became Chief Secretary for Ireland; and in that capacity he brought in a useful measure for enabling the Irish to buy back their land. Loans of State money, to be paid off by easy stages, were advanced to native tenants for the purchase of their farms. Thus in many districts the old grievance was wiped out; and the alien landlord began to disappear. Almost despite itself the country became prosperous. Yet the appearance of tranquillity was deceptive. The iron had entered too deep into her soul, and Ireland did not forget. The spirit of nationality, which had survived a century of starvation and misrule, was not to be effaced by a few short years of plenty and good government. The cry for freedom was to rise again; and Mr. Gladstone, for all the scorn and obloquy which greeted him, had recognized a side of Irish character to which his critics had been blind.

The Liberal policy for Ireland had miscarried. But Liberalism itself survived the shock; and, so long as men at large retain their vision of a better future and a freer state, it will continue to survive. Trusting to the broad

common sense of the community, and believing that men know better how to order their own lives than any external authority can order them, the Liberal pins his faith upon the democracy and in the pursuit of his ideal he is prepared to take big risks. Often he is impatient at seeing the world lag so far behind his hope; and often too, like Mr. Gladstone, he is prone to under-estimate the weakness and futility of man. So, if he too readily imagines that backward peoples, like the Egyptians or the Bulgars, are ripe for the institutions of self-government, it is because he prefers to look at the better side of human character, and attributes to others who do not in fact possess them the same ideals as he himself pursues. Idealism, however, is not a principle much recognized in politics; and one reason why Mr. Gladstone was so much detested was because he too frequently adopted a superior moral tone. Men dislike an opponent who carries his conscience into politics; and the misfortune was that Mr. Gladstone's conscience was no ordinary one. It did not always behave in a straightforward or consistent fashion. It forbade him to make war upon the helpless Sudanese; yet it equally allowed a helpless Englishman to perish without succour in Khartoum. Could it be—men wondered—that this mysterious conscience was simply self-interest under a thin disguise? The Irish business confirmed their worst suspicions. Throughout the previous years Gladstone had never questioned the retention of the Union. He had shown as firm a hand as any statesman in suppressing the wild violence of the Irish. Then came the day when he found himself for once at the mercy of the Parnellite Home Rulers—immediately he saw fit to change his mind and his conscience told him to set Ireland free. It was only natural that his enemies felt doubts about the honesty of Mr. Gladstone's motives, and that they set down his assumption of high moral tone to a calculated cunning and hypocrisy. Yet, perhaps, what added sting to the hatred which they felt for him was something still more subtle—was there a consciousness deep down in their own hearts that Mr. Gladstone after all was in the right?

CHAPTER XIV

EMPIRE AND IMPERIALISM

I

DURING all this clash and interplay of party politics at Westminster, and while men at home were as eagerly debating the effects of some new measure or the chances of a Ministry's survival as though upon such issues hung the country's very fate, Englishmen were meantime busy in distant continents and islands transforming and reshaping the destiny of the world. For the work of the previous century had not been final; and our Empire during these years had grown apace, until now there was scarcely a stretch of mainland or an ocean archipelago which it had not somewhere touched. Hitherto the growth had been strangely unobtrusive. It was seldom talked of; it had made little impression on the minds of the bulk of men. But now the time had come when its existence could no longer be ignored, and when the nation's decision must once and for all be taken concerning the responsibilities and meaning of this tremendous trust. Two views, in fact, prevailed about the future of our Colonies. On the one hand many saw in their possession no more than a passing phase. They believed that, as the great dependencies in North America had fallen from us, so in due course the remainder of our Colonies would some day fall away. Using the argument of metaphor, they would liken them to fruit which, when it comes to ripeness, drops from the mother tree, or to children who, grown to manhood, cast off the bonds of parental discipline and establish an independent household

of their own. To this view the later Liberal school in politics inclined. Not merely, as we have seen, did Gladstone shrink from making fresh annexations overseas; but he and his party were averse no less to any interference in our existing Colonies' affairs. The individual freedom, which Whig doctrine preached at home, they wished to extend equally to the countries we had conquered or absorbed. Empire to them meant little beyond opportunities of trade; and in trade itself it was an axiom of their policy that either party should so far as possible be free. According, therefore, to the Liberal way of thinking it would be injudicious and impolitic to maintain our connection with the Colonies for any longer than the Colonies themselves desired. But there was another view. Disraeli had taught the Conservatives a lesson which was to bear abundant fruit in after years. He showed that Empire was a source of strength, not weakness; and that, while allowing the Colonies a large measure of self-government, we should strive to bind them by ties of common sentiment and interest more closely to ourselves. Empire, in short, was not a thing to be handled with a shamefaced timidity. It was a proud and valuable heritage which might, if rightly used, promote at once the material prosperity of England and the spread of British political ideals through the world. Thus taught, men came to take a conscious pride in Empire. They boasted of the circle of far-flung dominions upon which in his daily travel the sun now never set. They rejoiced to variegate their maps with bright red markings, as a visible reminder of our great possessions. Imperialism, in fact, became a fashionable enthusiasm. Despite our commercial instincts we are a sentimental race; and the idea of a lasting union with our colonial cousins served well to reinforce the growing sense of the more solid and tangible advantages accruing from their trade.

The Imperial spirit then was the fruit and not the cause of a century's Empire-building; and, if we awakened slowly to the importance of our overseas possessions, we had also been no less casual and haphazard in our method of acquiring them. At the beginning of the century the world had lain

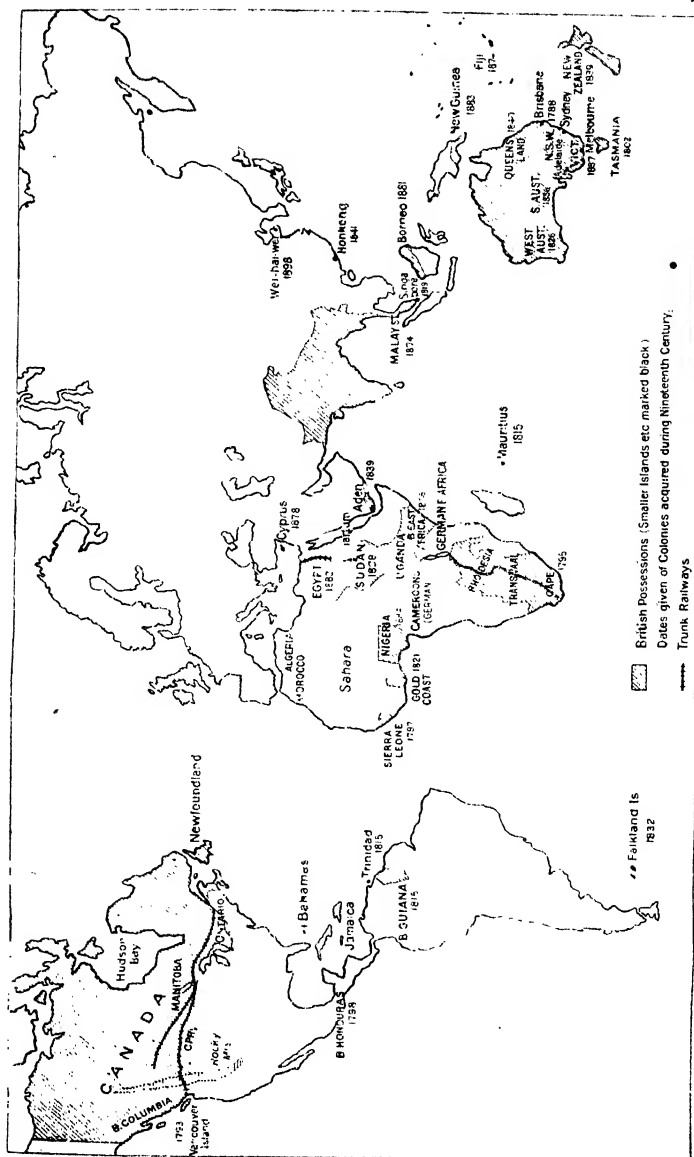
before us. Serious rivals we had none. Spain, Portugal, and Holland had long since dropped out of the race. France after a hundred years of fighting had been finally defeated. Germany had still to become a nation; and her commercial expansion was not destined to begin until near the century's close. We had, therefore, a clear field. Yet the British Government was strangely slow to seize the obvious chance. Whatever our foreign critics may assert, it displayed no indecent hurry to rush in and hoist the Union Jack in every vacant corner of the world. On the contrary, it showed a positive disinclination for adding new responsibilities to old. Sometimes it was wilfully remiss in taking official action; sometimes annexations which had already been achieved by men upon the spot were actually countermanded by the authorities at home. Our machinery, too, for dealing with colonial government was tardily developed; during the first half of the century the Secretary for War had charge of all such business, and it was not until the eve of the Crimea that an independent office for the Colonies was formed. All this perhaps was natural. The attention of our Ministers was mainly riveted on European politics. They paid but little heed to the larger world without; and such progress as we made—unofficial or official—was generally the handiwork of individual pioneers. Commercial enterprise was perhaps the chief inducement. Merchants planted posts where opportunity offered; and trade, so far from "following the flag," was more often in advance of it. But there was another motive. In the less thickly peopled and more temperate countries of North America, Australia, and South Africa we now found a useful outlet for our surplus manhood. The population of the British Isles was multiplied at least threefold during the progress of the century; and, under the stern conditions of industrial competition which prevailed, many were tempted to exchange their British homes for the more alluring prospects of colonial life. So, while in tropical and equatorial regions the traders were pushing our interest in pursuit of wealth, the slow stream of emigration was peopling fertile hinter-

lands elsewhere with a sturdy race of Anglo-Saxon farmers. With these two processes of overseas expansion we must now deal ; and we will look first at trade.

The vigour and extent of British commercial enterprise we have long since emphasized in the course of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries ; nor need we repeat the obvious truth that England's greatness had been largely built upon the wealth thus won. Towards the end, however, of the eighteenth century her mercantile activities had received a fresh and vital stimulus. The Industrial Revolution, which multiplied production by the aid of the machine, had proportionately multiplied the volume of our exports. All kinds of manufactured goods were sent circling through the world ; and they found a ready market among coloured peoples no less than among whites. Cotton fabrics, guns and knives, not to speak of metal trinkets and the rest, were eagerly accepted by delighted natives, who in return gave us the peculiar products of their own hot and fertile lands. They provided us with many raw materials for our manufacture, oils for example, or, in the later stages, rubber. They sent us fruits and foods and spices such as England cannot grow ; and the result has been to change the very diet of our people, who soon came to prefer tea and coffee at their breakfast in the place of ale or beer, while the abundant importation of cheap sugar has enormously increased the popularity of jam. During the nineteenth century such trade has steadily developed ; and the rapid improvement of sea-communications due to the invention of the steamship has naturally helped much. Other causes, however, have been at work and have stimulated enterprise in fresh directions. At the beginning of the century, the West Indies were even more than India proper the most fertile source of wealth. But their productiveness depended very largely on slave labour ; and the liberation of the negroes in the thirties struck the West Indian planters a cruel blow. The palmy days they had enjoyed during the previous century were ended ; and more and more merchants came to seek their fortune not so much beyond the Atlantic

as in the East. There, at the close of the Napoleonic wars, we held not merely India, but, as the spoils of victory, Mauritius and Ceylon. Golden prospects were thus opened out; and the tide of trade accordingly turned eastwards. It was not, however, till more than half-way through the century that its course was simplified by a scheme of brilliant enterprise and foresight. In 1869 the canal was completed through the Suez Isthmus. It was the work of Frenchmen, not of Englishmen; but its benefits were ours. Disraeli's timely purchase of the Khedive's shares gave us a controlling interest in the great canal. Already in 1839 by a fine stroke of fortune we had possessed ourselves of Aden; and thus to the great advantage of our traders we held the keys of the Red Sea. The result was that we were not merely able to exploit in a full measure the enormous resources we already owned in India; we proceeded also to push farther afield.

In the Far East three main areas, as yet but little touched, awaited the enterprise of our merchants—the Malay Peninsula, the Coast of China, and the Pacific Isles. In the first we already had a foothold. At Penang in 1800 and at Singapore nineteen years later settlements had been founded under the British flag. In the early seventies, however, our previous holdings were considerably extended. We annexed some adjacent islands, took control of the native mainland states, and not long after added North Borneo to the rest. Sarawak, the independent "conquest" of an adventurous Englishman, who had won single-handed a kingdom for himself and ruled under the resounding title-name of "Rajah" Brooke, was likewise made a protectorate of the Crown. Nor was it long before the effects of orderly government were felt. The restless native princes quieted down; and the whole important group of the Malay settlements enjoyed an unparalleled prosperity. Away to the north, meanwhile, we had begun to tap the incalculable wealth which lay stored in stagnant China. Since the seventeenth century the East India Company had enjoyed the special privilege of trading with Canton. In 1833 this



THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN 1900.

monopoly was ended, with the result that trade increased. The Chinese, however, resented the growing intrusion of the foreigner, and especially the importation of the noxious opium drug. Six years later the native High Commissioner ordered the destruction of the English opium stores. War followed—the most unjust in history, so Mr. Gladstone said—and the upshot was that the Chinese climbed down, threw open their five chief ports to European shipping, and ceded to ourselves the valuable island of Hong-Kong. Fresh trouble arose twenty years later. Peking was entered and the Summer Palace sacked. With that the resistance of the natives to commercial penetration began slowly to break down. Wei-hai-wei, which we acquired in the last years of the century, gave us a northern port scarcely less useful than Hong-Kong itself; and by degrees the influence of European manners has tempered the habitual aloofness of the conservative Chinese. It remains to mention briefly the Pacific Isles. Here, too, as elsewhere, traders had long since found a way; and missionaries followed. The islanders were bullied by rapacious settlers, perplexed and driven to faction by the zeal of conflicting sects. In 1871 Bishop Patteson was murdered by a tribe of outraged natives; and then at last, though much against its will, the British Government was forced to intervene. The Fiji group of islands was brought within the Empire. Their value to ourselves lay in the sugar groves and other rarer products of a luxuriant climate; and this flanking settlement in the extremest east completed, as it were, our girdle round the world. The Falkland Islands off the Strait of Magellan—secured, as it so happened, in 1833—provided our ships with a convenient port of call in South America; and thus the great chain of Empire was knit up in a connection which was less the result of calculated policy than of the Englishman's good luck.

One continent remains of which in this history little mention has been made. The discovery of Africa may be said to have been the work of the nineteenth century. Of its southern regions we shall speak anon, falling as they do among the "emigration" areas; but the tropical centre of a

widely different climate has offered opportunities for trade much more on eastern lines. On the western side our holdings have never been much more than coastal stations to which produce can be transported from the hinterland. Sierra Leone—founded just before the beginning of the century as a philanthropic settlement for liberated slaves—became a Crown Colony a few years later. The Gold Coast was soon added; and the African company of merchants which had hitherto administered it, deprived of their monopoly. A similar company which held rights in South Nigeria was likewise dispossessed just before the century's close; and, though more than once they had given us serious trouble, the Ashanti were forced eventually to bow the neck. This string of Colonies affords rich returns to merchants; and the natives, who once served as material for the Slave Trade, are not unwilling to work for trifling pay; but the unwholesome climate, breeding fevers and mosquitoes, sets an inevitable limit to the Colony's success. The hinterland, meanwhile, until then an unknown country, had been gradually unveiled. David Livingstone in the mid year of the century had traversed the continent from coast to coast. Stanley and others continued with the work, penetrating swamps and trackless jungles, hunting the big game, and discovering strange tribes of backward peoples. The chief impetus, however, to the opening up of Central Africa came from the eastern coast. Here also chartered companies were busy many years before the Home Government stepped in; and not till we were faced with German competition did we grasp the necessity for annexation. Then in 1888 and 1890 we staked out our claim; and Uganda, British East Africa, and Zanzibar became Protectorates of the Crown. The subsequent penetration of the South Sudan linked up these new possessions with the north; while the expansion through the Transvaal to Rhodesia made contact equally with our provinces in the south. Other nations had not been idle. The Germans, Belgians, French, and Portuguese each claimed their slice of Africa. But none of their possessions was so aptly placed as ours. For here too good

fortune and keen enterprise had favoured us. Our scattered settlements were so disposed that we could form of them one long continuous chain; and the project was soon fostered of constructing lines of railway which should link them up from Cairo to the Cape. But the history of this and other grandiose schemes of African development belongs rather to the second division of our subject—the great self-governing Dominions which our emigrants have filled.

We will begin with Canada. When the revolted colonies of New England seceded from the Empire in the reign of George III, we were fortunate in the fact that Canada as yet was scarcely peopled. With the handful of French settlers so recently defeated in the Seven Years War we were not likely to encounter serious trouble. Their militia indeed refused to take up arms for the defence of their own frontier; but they made no open rising and British regiments repelled the secessionists' attack. So Canada was left to us; and into it, when the war was over, passed a stream of loyal colonials who preferred the rule of England to the newly formed Republic of the United States. At first the influx came from the United States alone, and went chiefly to the wooded districts round Lake Ontario, which were known as Upper Canada. The population, though increasing, was still scanty when in 1812 the United States took umbrage at the maritime blockade we had imposed on Europe's commerce and rushed into war against us. For the moment Canada seemed doomed, threatened as she was by the invasion of overwhelming numbers; but the French and British residents showed a united front, and after three years' fighting the Americans had made no impression on the frontier. With the declaration of peace in 1815, the Colony's history entered a new phase. Emigrants now began to flock from home. The long years of starvation and low wages which followed Waterloo sent Englishmen in thousands to people the two provinces of Upper and Lower Canada. The climate, though severe in winter season, is admirably suited to the Anglo-Saxon. Hard work was necessary to clear the trees and scrub; but in the virgin soil

once opened heavy crops could soon be raised ; and land at a nominal price was available for every comer. So, as fresh contingents of immigrants came over, the area of settlement spread fast. In the milder climate of south-eastern districts fruit-farms have sprung up. The inexhaustible forests which surround the whole Lake country have given occupation to large hosts of lumber-men. Hunters have pushed northwards for the furs of animals ; and the more recent discovery of gold at Klondyke has tempted many into the far north-west. Wheat, however, remains the staple product of the colony ; and with the slow, laborious process of land-clearing the area of cultivation has spread beyond the Lakes across the open prairie to the foot of the great barrier of the Rocky Mountain range. Thus from one side to the other of the whole vast continent there now runs a narrow belt—measuring at most two hundred miles in breadth—of more or less developed and populated country. Beyond the Rockies lie the two remote dependencies, which since 1871 have formed a part of the Dominion proper—British Columbia and Vancouver Island. These two in the first instance were discovered from the Pacific side. Cook visited the island in the eighteenth century ; and one Captain Vancouver who explored it shortly after had given it his name. It was, however, a Canadian trader who first came across the mountains and tapped the resources of these regions. The hinterland of both the mainland and the island is wild and thickly wooded ; but a narrow coastal strip provides a climate exceptionally mild and well suited to fruit growing. Its commerce has received an enormous stimulus from the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which climbs the Rockies and thus links the farthest West with the ports of the St. Lawrence and Atlantic trade routes. Thanks to this wise development of her communications, the prosperity of Canada makes rapid strides ; and for few countries in the world can we predict a more brilliant future.

It was unlikely and unnatural that the administration of this great Dominion should long remain in the same

dependence upon England as the majority of the Colonies of which we spoke above. Those in the main are governed directly by agents of the Crown ; and it will be long before their native populations can possibly be ripe for democratic institutions. In Canada, however, the presence of an exclusively white population raised a very different problem. The stern conditions of their strenuous life has produced an extremely vigorous, self-reliant race of men, closely akin in many ways to their immediate neighbours of the States. Had we thought fit to treat them in the same high-handed manner as we treated the citizens of New England, the same result would assuredly have followed, and Canada been lost to us. But we had learnt our lesson ; and little by little we have extended to her sons the rights and privileges of genuine self-government. In 1791 an Act was passed in the Home Parliament, which, while splitting the Colony into two separate States of Upper and Lower Canada, gave each a Constitution of the British type. There was to be an Upper House, appointed for life by the British Crown, and a Lower House of elected representatives ; while the Governor, sent out from England, performed, as it were, the functions of the King. In point of fact, however, the Governor's authority was well-nigh paramount ; the executive power, for which he was responsible to the Home Government alone, lay entirely in his hands ; and the two assemblies could do little more than talk. Almost from the start the scheme worked badly. In Upper Canada the Governor's predominance, though backed by the approval of the more conservative first-comers, was greatly resented by the newly arrived immigrants. In Lower Canada the strong French element was even more blatant in its demands for pure democracy. By 1837 the trouble came to a head ; and in both provinces the malcontents took arms. They were easily suppressed ; and the governor sent out from England to set things right again was happily a statesman of wide and liberal views—Lord Durham. His solution of the problem was to merge the two separate provinces in one. This was done ; and in 1842 a Constitution, consist-

ing as before of two legislative houses, was established. Fuller powers were soon extended to this Union Parliament. In 1847 Lord Durham's successor and son-in-law, Lord Elgin, began the practice of choosing the Executive, as the British Cabinet is chosen, from the party preponderating in the Lower House. Thus Canada became in a true sense self-governing. The demands of the British colonists were satisfied. The French, though still aggressive, slowly absorbed the saner atmosphere of British common sense; and the political life of the Dominion assumed a healthier tone. It remained to draw into the Union the other dependencies which lay around. This move was hastened by the alarm aroused first by the object lesson of the American Civil War, and then by the Fenian raids which followed shortly after. Sir John Macdonald, a shrewd Canadian statesman, who conceived this great ideal, met with much opposition; but he was eventually successful in achieving it. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick first joined the Federation; then Manitoba was purchased from the Trading Company of Hudson Bay. British Columbia, though parted from the rest by the Rockies and the prairie, threw in her lot with them in 1871. Only Newfoundland, now herself self-governing, has preferred to remain aloof. Thus Canada led the way in developing a system of Colonial independence, which has served in reality to bind her yet more closely in a voluntary allegiance to the mother country. The generosity of our statesmen, who allowed the step, has been abundantly repaid; and their wise concessions marked, as we now see, a critical turning-point in the history of the Empire's evolution.

Australia's story has not been equally eventful. By reason of her late development and natural isolation she has been far more self-contained and less subject to external influences; but her progress has not on that account been less interesting to us; for her policy, unfettered by the traditions of a past, has led to bolder experiments perhaps in the realm of pure democracy than any other English-speaking country has attempted. Australia's start was bad.

First sighted by a Spaniard soon after 1600, her coasts had not been methodically explored until the voyage of Captain Cook in 1770. Cook's primary object had been scientific observation; and, carrying as he did a botanical expert on his staff, one spot on the East coast which he had visited was nicknamed "Botany Bay." Hither in 1788 came the first permanent white settlers on the continent; and they were convicts, transported to this unknown wilderness of the Pacific seas, because since the revolt of the New England colonies, they could no longer be safely sent to North America. Let us not, however, mistake the character of these men. They were not of necessity all deep-dyed criminals. The Penal Code was at that time very harsh; and many were transported for trifling misdemeanours, in some cases merely political in character. This notwithstanding, a sort of slur was cast upon the early settlements these exiled folk inhabited. Sydney, near Botany Bay, was the first; and it formed the nucleus of New South Wales. Others were planted in Tasmania and in the neighbourhood of Brisbane, north of Sydney. The transportation system continued far into the nineteenth century, and was not finally abandoned till the sixties. Meanwhile, however, more reputable immigrants had been arriving in large numbers. Gold, which was discovered in 1851, had brought out thousands of adventurers; and the extensive uplands suitable for grazing had made sheep-farming a most profitable business. New South Wales had formed the starting-point, and played, as it were, the rôle of mother-colony. Close on her southern border grew Victoria round its capital of Melbourne, which took its title from the young Queen's first Prime Minister, as the Colony itself was called after the Queen. Away to the north spread Queensland round its capital Brisbane. These two broke off during the fifties, and became henceforth separate States. Meanwhile a year or two before the Queen's accession the tide of immigration had found out other coasts. West and South Australia had been colonized, and shortly afterwards New Zealand had been invaded. The last two settlements were made under

the auspices of a new school of British politicians. Gibbon Wakefield, a friend of the Lord Durham who had set Canada to rights, was by sympathy a Liberal; but, unlike many Liberals, he believed that Colonies, if generously treated, might remain the loyal adherents of the Crown. It was his enthusiasm which helped to launch both South Australia and New Zealand on their great careers. They were intended to be run as model Colonies; and, though at certain points the schemes broke down, they have kept true in the main issue to the ideals Wakefield held and have coloured the whole policy of the Australian Commonwealth. For democratic principles have here won a signal triumph. The Upper House of Representatives is even more representative of popular opinion than the Lower. Women have been granted the vote, long before it was given to their English cousins; and Labour Governments have successfully held office for considerable periods. In New Zealand alone has the problem of a native population been seriously encountered. There the Maoris, unlike the low type aborigines of the mainland, are a fighting race, once cannibals; and they gave us much trouble in the forties and the sixties, when stubborn wars were fought. But their animosity has since been pacified; and there is no more striking testimony to the success of British methods than the inclusion of Maori chieftains at the present day in the New Zealand Parliament. For all that, there is no country in the world prouder than is New Zealand. She goes her own ways in the conscious certainty that she leads the van of progress; and when in 1900 the States of the main continent were joined together in the great Federation of the Australian Commonwealth,¹ she preferred to stand apart. The fact is that, as in Canada, the healthy outdoor life led here among the sheep farms and the goldfields has produced in all these lands a peculiarly hardy, independent stock. The Australians and New Zealanders carry their heads high and will take

¹ Federation means that, while there are local Parliaments in each Province or State to deal with local matters, a common Parliament is formed of representatives from each to deal with matters of common policy.

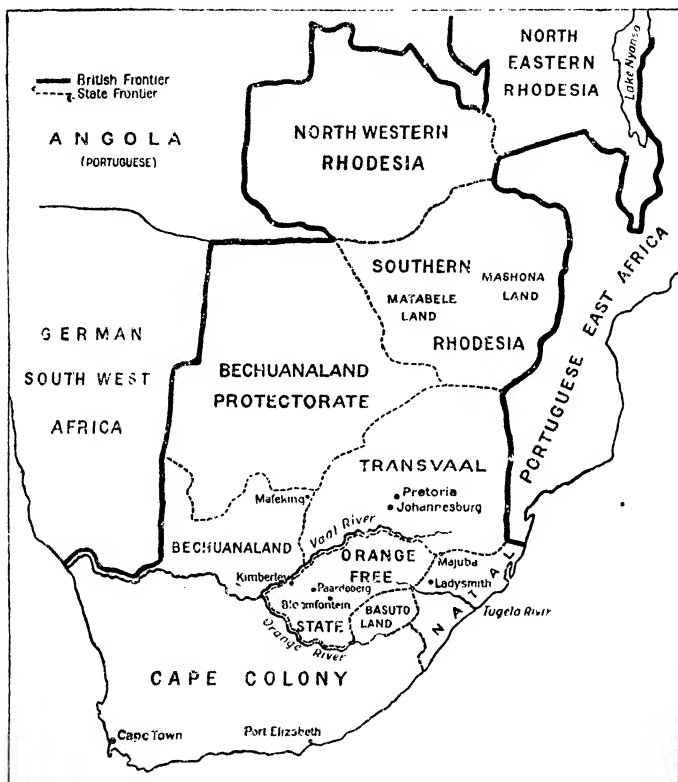
commands from no man. England has been wise, if indeed the choice were hers, to drive so spirited a team upon an easy rein.

If Australia's problems have been simple and clear cut, very different have been the problems of South Africa; for two fresh elements there entered in, which served greatly to complicate the issue—first, the existence of a large native population, outnumbering the white men even now by six to one, and, second, the settlement previous to our own of Dutch immigrants from Europe. Between these Dutchmen, the natives, and ourselves there has been a continuous three-cornered struggle. The blacks, however, once the white man came, were doomed sooner or later to fall beneath his yoke; and the real antagonism has lain, in fact, between the political ideals of the two races of white immigrants. The Dutchmen, backward, conservative, and grasping, have desired to exploit the natives to the full, robbing them of their liberty at the same time as their land and using them to all intents and purposes as slaves. Our representatives, upon the other hand, have at least desired to give the natives justice; and, though we have gradually absorbed their territory, this policy has more often than not been forced upon us by the necessity of preserving them from the Dutchman's harder yoke. Thus our advance from the Cape upwards has been faltering and—one may almost say—involuntary; and the vacillations of the Government at home, however honourable in their intention, have not infrequently proved disastrous in the result.

It was slightly more than half-way through the seventeenth century that the Dutch established their station at the Cape, using it mainly as a port of call for India. But, as time went on, the settlement increased, swelled simultaneously by fresh emigrants from Holland and by Huguenots from France. Then, during our great French wars and when Holland itself became Napoleon's pawn, we seized the Cape; and in 1815 the terms of the peace treaty made it ours. The Dutch colonists, or Boers as we shall henceforth call them, became thus the subjects of the British

Crown; we gave them such rights as our own colonists enjoyed; and, had they seen eye to eye with us upon the native question, all would have been well; but they did not. They were horrified and indignant when in 1828 we extended civil rights to all natives residing within the British border. Their anger was increased when in 1833 we passed the famous law emancipating slaves; and, though the Boer slave-owners received some compensation for their loss, they could not understand, still less forgive, the philanthropy which caused it. The last straw came in 1834, when the annexation of some Kaffir country east of Cape Town, which had been effected by the local governor and which suited exactly the policy of the Boers, was countermanded by the Government in London. Two years later, their deep resentment took an unexpected shape, which has changed the whole history of South Africa. For a large number, though not all, of these infuriated farmers made up their minds to quit. They packed their goods and chattels upon wagons, put in their wives and families along with them, said a last farewell to their old homes, cracked their whips, set the oxen in motion, and disappeared into the north. Across the Orange River some came to a halt and settled down; others pressed farther north across the Vaal. At such a distance from the Cape they fancied themselves free from British interference, and here at least hoped to have it their own way with the surrounding tribes. The "Great Trek," as it was called, raised up a thorny problem for the British Government. Even in their new and distant domicile we began by claiming these truants as subjects of the Crown. In the early fifties we reversed that policy, giving their freedom to the twin Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange River Free State, and only making a proviso that they should not enslave the natives. But a Boer's pledge is lightly given; and we were soon to find that his tactics had not changed. Bad tales came down of his high-handed methods, which greatly disturbed the conscience of our rulers, shrinking as they did from further annexation, yet feeling in part responsible for what

went on. In 1868 we had to intervene between the Boers and the Basutos, with the result that Basutoland became a protectorate of our own. In 1876 we found the Boers once more making trouble with the Zulus; and, fearful of the



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consequences were this war-like tribe let loose upon white colonists, we decided that the dangerous farce must end. So the Transvaal Republic was annexed to the British Crown. But the step brought us no peace. For more than thirty years our settlers had been pushing up the

eastern coastline and occupying the long district called Natal. This province now impinged upon the Zulu country; and, though hitherto their tribesmen had been friendly towards our people, they much resented our new action in taking their other neighbours and old enemies the Boers under our own protection—for that is how the annexation had appeared to them. In any case, after a year or two they rose. Our meagre forces were hard put to it to cope with them. One battalion was surrounded at a place called Isandhlwana and perished to a man. In the heroic battle of Rorke's Drift our defence was more successful; but it took a force ten thousand strong from England to put the Zulus in their place. Nor was this bad affair long over when fresh trouble burst upon us. The Boers had gradually been working up for war. They had taken great affront at our seizure of the district around Kimberley, where we claimed the famous diamond fields in 1871; and, now that their liberty was once more taken from them, they felt their case to be intolerable. A promise had been made indeed of giving them self-government; but nothing came of it; the authorities at home still dallied with the notion; and in 1881 the Boers were up. The *commandos* gathered. The British garrisons in the Transvaal were cut off; and presently our officer-in-chief, named Sir George Colley, in attempting to move northwards from Natal to their relief, was overwhelmed. Beaten back with heavy losses at Laing's Neck, he was surrounded shortly after at Majuba Hill; and the whole of his small force was either killed or captured. This disaster brought about a critical situation; and we stood now, as it were, at the parting of the ways. Mr. Gladstone, who was then in power, had long been pondering in his elusive soul on the problems of Boer freedom. On entering office he had announced his firm intention of retaining the Republic under British rule. Before Majuba he had averred his readiness to treat about the question. After Majuba he threw up the sponge and gave the Boers their liberty. It was a rash concession; and it worked out ill. Elated by the triumph of their

arms, the Boers took heart anew. Their President, Paul Kruger, was ambitious for his race. He saw a vision of the Boer Republics extending a powerful influence beyond their borders, repeating perhaps their recent feats of arms, and establishing—who knew if it were too much to hope?—a Dutch South Africa. Such was Paul Kruger's dream, and he prepared.

Meanwhile, the British residents in the Cape and other provinces had grown apace. The Kaffirs had long since been fought into submission. The Colony had become self-governing and was fast becoming rich: and there were many powerful merchants who had made their pile and who realized well enough the value of a British South Africa to themselves. One who was also rich, but who set England before riches, saw possibilities of a still grander sort, and dreamt of an Empire which should stretch beyond the Cape, beyond the Orange River and the Transvaal States, and reach into the dim and unexplored interior of the north. That man was Cecil Rhodes. This son of a Hertfordshire parson had gone out as a boy, with nothing in his pocket, to grow cotton in Natal. On the discovery of the diamond mines at Kimberley he had joined the general rush; and there, by sheer industry and force of character, he had built up a commanding position for himself. He became head of De Beers' Consolidated Mines, and grew fabulously wealthy. But wealth for its own sake was not his goal. To him it was the mere means of securing a nobler cause, the cause he had most at heart. In his successive wills—and he made many—he always left the bulk of his huge fortune in trust for the British Empire's use; and no sooner was his financial position well secured than he bethought him of his ideal and turned to politics. In 1880 he took a seat in the Cape Parliament; and now it was that his work of territorial expansion was begun. He knew the country and he knew the tribes, as few other British knew them; and, as a result, he was frequently employed on commissions to the natives. In 1883 he was dispatched north-west to deal with the chiefs

of Bechuanaland; and his persuasive influence there won us the addition of an enormous new protectorate. His next mission carried him farther still to Matabeleland, which lies north of Bechuana and the Transvaal. Here a chief called Lobengula was a powerful potentate; and it was resolved to approach him with a demand for trade concessions. Rhodes's power of dealing with natives was astounding. Once, with a few companions, but unarmed and unescorted, he went into a campful of unfriendly warriors armed to the very teeth; there won the chieftain over by dint of argument, and ended by reading the fellow a stiff lecture upon the error of his ways. With Lobengula he wrestled hard and long; but in the end he triumphed and won the king's consent. A chartered company was licensed to exploit the land's resources; and in 1890 an official expedition was sent up country to install it. The Matabele subjects of King Lobengula were highly suspicious of this foreign influx; and, respecting their alarm, we first occupied Mashonaland, which lies away to east of them. Further expansion, however, was inevitable; and, war breaking out a few years later, we occupied the Matabele country too. The whole enormous district which Rhodes's policy thus won was christened, after him, Rhodesia. "Equal rights for every civilized man south of the Zambesi" had been the watchword of Rhodes's enterprise. The Zambesi had now been reached. In 1890 Rhodes himself had become Prime Minister of the Cape; the future of South Africa lay in his hands; and the only obstacle which stood across his path and checked the realization of his great ambition was the hostile attitude of the two Boer Republics. They, unfortunately, did not believe in equal rights for every civilized man—still less did they believe in what we call liberty and progress. Rhodes knew them well; but with a true statesman's breadth of vision he desired to see them work along with us towards the common goal of a civilized South Africa. To this end he cultivated a friendly understanding with such Boers as had remained within our borders. He approached the Orange

Free State with great schemes for laying railways and for opening up the country. He even wasted time in argument with Kruger. But the latter was as obstinate as only a Boer can be. He refused to let a railway cross his frontier. He tried to block the fords and thus sever all contact with the commerce of the Cape. His resistance in due time was overborne; but his attitude of hatred and suspicion was maintained. He was still playing with the dream of an all-Dutch South Africa; but not less obstinately was Rhodes resolved that, if South Africa was to belong to anyone at all, it was to be British and not Dutch—and the hour of decision was now near.

II

Such, then, was the legacy of Empire—pregnant no doubt with many anxious problems, yet on the whole secure and firmly knit—with which the British Government of the nineties was entrusted. In 1886, after the first Home Rule Bill and the fall of Gladstone, the Conservatives, or (as they now preferred to call themselves) the Unionists, had taken office. Lord Salisbury was their Premier, and they had an immense majority; but their achievement had scarcely been equal to their promise. They had arranged the celebration of Queen Victoria's jubilee, passed a Bill creating County Councils, made national education free of charge, reduced the National Debt, and disappeared. For the General Election of 1892 had returned Gladstone once again to power. He failed, as we have seen, in his second effort to grant Home Rule to Ireland; then handed the reins of office to his Foreign Secretary, Lord Rosebery, and retired. Lord Rosebery had struggled on for eighteen months, but never passed a single vital Bill, though he framed many. The fact is that the Liberals were played out and the country was aware of it; and in 1895 the Unionists came back. This time Lord Salisbury included in his Cabinet one prominent seceder from the Liberal ranks, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. Gladstonian policies, and

above all the Gladstonian policy for Ireland, had converted this Birmingham manufacturer into an ardent Unionist and a champion of the Imperialist ideal. The new Government indeed was strongly pledged, not merely to maintain at any cost the Irish Union, but to knit up the Colonies with whatever ties might serve to bind them closer to ourselves. For the British public was now conscious of its destiny. It had lost all sympathy for Gladstone's squeamish conscience; it felt no qualms about "rising nationalities" in distant lands. On the contrary, it was very earnestly convinced that the British Empire was the world's greatest instrument for good; and it desired no better policy than to cast the net more widely. Men and women were beginning to attend lectures on the subject of the Colonies and to put it into books to teach their children. The most popular poet of the day was Rudyard Kipling, who trumpeted in verse the glories of dominion and sang of the white man's heavy burden in governing the black. Clearly the Salisbury Government had a mandate to go forward boldly on their course; and when the moment came, they did not fail.

The opportunity of making good their purpose came first in the Sudan. Egypt had been reformed with swift efficiency under the able administration of Lord Cromer; the corrupt and despotic methods of the old Mohammedan régime had been abolished; the irrigation of the fertile valley of the Nile made rapid progress; Egypt thrived, as she had never thriven since the day the Romans left her fifteen centuries before. But in the Sudan things were different. There the Mahdi's successor proved no better than the Mahdi; and the wild fanatic Dervishes made frequent raids on the lands of Southern Egypt. The reconquest of what Gladstone had abandoned was imperative. A trained Egyptian army was to hand. British regiments were drafted out to stiffen them; Kitchener was sent to organize the expedition, and he did it to perfection. In the heavy battle of Omdurman the Dervishes fought like men possessed. But the steady discipline of Kitchener's force was too much for

these ill-armed savages. Khartoum was entered and the Sudan occupied. At the eleventh hour indeed there arose a crisis which bade fair to mar our triumph. At Fashoda, near Khartoum, there suddenly appeared a small French force under Colonel Marchand, which had made its way overland from the far-distant Congo, and which aggressively claimed the South Sudan for France. Our Government stood firm, while Paris blustered; and the claim was eventually withdrawn. It was as well; for within a twelve-month we were involved in a struggle at the other end of Africa for which England's full energies were needed.

For our relations with the Transvaal were now strained to breaking-point; and the situation which had developed there was this. In 1886 goldfields had been discovered in the neighbourhood of what is now Johannesburg. The usual rush of adventurers had followed; and a large local population of British nationality had thus settled down under the Boer régime. As might have been expected, they were treated with hostility and insolence. They were bled white by taxes which were out of all proportion and which provided nineteen-twentieths of the whole Boer revenue. At the same time all share in the country's political life was obstinately denied to them. They were not even allowed to have a vote. In short, the lot of these so-called "Uitlanders" was quite intolerable; and the Boer, intent on keeping his own country to himself, meant that it should be so. By 1895, however, the patience of the Uitlanders was exhausted, and a plot was set on foot for a great rising. At the last moment their courage failed them, and the rising was called off. But Dr. Jameson, the Matabeleland Commissioner, resolved on a bold stroke, and, collecting six hundred horsemen from his province, he rode upon Pretoria. This "Raid," as it was called, proved a ludicrous fiasco; but it did endless harm. It brought about the fall of Cecil Rhodes, who had given secret backing to the project. It aggravated the Uitlanders' condition; and it stiffened the resolve of the Boer President, Paul Kruger, to push the issue with Great Britain to the test of arms.

His calculations, though at many points ill-founded, were not so crazy as appeared upon first sight. He believed he would get help from our European rivals; but, though the Kaiser wired his congratulations on the defeat of Jameson's Raid, expressions of sympathy were all that Kruger got when the hour of reckoning came. No less erroneously, as the sequel was to prove, he counted on the co-operation of those fellow-Boers who still resided within the borders of Cape Province; very few fulfilled his hope. But, even without such external aids as these, the Boers were no despicable force. They had the advantage of long preparation; their farmer-soldiers were well mounted and armed with Mauser rifles. Siege guns had secretly been smuggled in from Europe; and, above all, they knew their country like a book. The British Government, in fact, had no conception with what kind of enemy they had to deal; but, ignorant or no of the Boer's fighting strength, they were determined to put him in his place. Mr. Chamberlain, as Colonial Secretary, and Sir Alfred Milner, as Governor of the Cape, undertook negotiations; but they were foredoomed to failure from the start. For there could be now no turning back. It was not perhaps a very glorious posture for a country like Great Britain to be threatening and browbeating two diminutive Republics; nor were the commercial magnates, who pressed hotly for strong measures, a particularly high-minded or disinterested lot. Yet the Boers themselves had long since made clear the issue. South Africa could count on neither peace nor progress so long as their wilful obstruction blocked the way. They left us little choice but to go forward. To have gone back would have been to ruin all; and, if with foreign nations we incurred the charge of unsportsmanlike behaviour, there were few who had a right to cast the stone at us. In October of 1899 Kruger's ultimatum reached us and we were at war with both Republics.

The opening stages of the three years' struggle were a severe shock to British confidence. We had badly underestimated our foe. In a brief time the Boers had taken

the offensive. In the west they had invested our outlying stations, Mafeking and Kimberley. On the south they had crossed the Orange River and invaded the Cape frontier. On the east—and this was their most determined effort—they had swept into Natal. Here our defence broke down disastrously; and after a series of forlorn engagements Sir George White was locked up in Ladysmith. Reserves, however, had been gathering at Cape Town; and Sir Redvers Buller, now our *generalissimo*, was preparing to strike back. Most unhappily, though for a variety of reasons, he attempted to strike in three places at a time, and the result was three defeats. Lord Methuen in the west, while trying to reach Kimberley, was badly cut up on the hills of Magersfontein. Gatacre, sent to engage the invaders of Cape Colony, was led astray by guides on a night march and his men surprised into a panic. Buller himself, who had moved east into Natal, was checked in front of the Tugela River. Neither the general nor the soldiers under him were as yet familiar with the new conditions under which they fought. The Boers took cover with the skill of seasoned veterans; and when Buller moved against them in a front-to-front attack, our ranks, which were insufficiently deployed, afforded an easy target to an invisible foe. Buller's loss on the Tugela was not, in fact, excessive; but his repulse disheartened him; and, though the garrison of Ladysmith was sorely pressed, he refused to risk another battle. The news of these three defeats, reaching London in December, filled the British public with unfeigned alarm. But "Black Week," as it was called, undoubtedly provided the stimulus to effort that we needed. Troops were poured out to Cape Town. New corps of volunteers were hurriedly enrolled. Even the Colonies prepared to find contingents. And, most significant of all, the veteran Lord Roberts was sent out as *generalissimo* with Kitchener himself as chief of staff. Lord Roberts's arrival in South Africa worked marvels. He reversed the whole strategy of Redvers Buller; and, while the latter was kept hammering on the Tugela River, our main concen-

tration was directed to the west. Here, covering Kimberley, lay Cronje's army; its size was not considerable, and, thanks to the secrecy of Roberts's movements, no steps had been taken to reinforce it. When all was ready, Sir John French's cavalry swept north round Cronje's flank and raised the siege of Kimberley. The infantry meanwhile struck in towards Bloemfontein, and, fearing for his communications with the Free State capital, Cronje was soon upon the run. He was rounded up at a place called Paardeberg and surrendered with fully four thousand men. Meanwhile, but only in the nick of time, Sir Redvers Buller had broken past the Boers on the Tugela and pushed up to Ladysmith. The garrison was half-starving when the relief arrived; but they had done their work. Their defence had occupied a large containing army and so helped to pave the way for the successes in the west. Thus, beaten in two theatres, the Boers' resistance collapsed suddenly. In March of 1900 Lord Roberts made his entry into the Free State capital. Dispatching a flying column to the relief of Baden-Powell up at Mafeking, he then himself proceeded against Pretoria. The Boers' now scattered forces won a few local triumphs, but the main issue no longer stood in doubt. On 5 June the Transvaal capital was entered; and in November Lord Roberts sailed for home. But the war was not yet over. The Boers, as we have shown, were stubborn fighters, and, what is more, they were slim folk to catch. There followed a long period of guerilla warfare, with which at first it was difficult to cope. Treachery, too, often made our task more arduous. A group of Boers would frequently surrender and deliver up their guns; then, when our backs were turned, they were out into the field again. The rolling uplands of the open veldt were ideal ground for stratagem; and the elusive tactics of such leaders as de Wet baffled our men's pursuit. We had long since learnt that in this sort of country one mounted man was of more use than ten on foot; but now it required the organizing genius of a Kitchener to devise effective methods of rounding up the foe. The end, in fact,

did not come into sight till an elaborate block-house system was erected. Encircling lines were drawn round the disaffected areas; and "drives" were instituted to hunt the enemy bands. At length, perceiving that the game was up, the Boers surrendered in the June of 1902. Their country was, of course, annexed by us. But for the rest our terms were generous. We allowed them the use of the Dutch language in their schools; we spent five million pounds on the resettling of their farmers; and, above all, we pledged our word at a convenient date to grant them the privilege of self-government. That pledge was kept; for in 1906, not five years after hostilities were over, they received the status of Dominion Colonies. In 1910, with Natal and the Cape province, they were knit into a federated Union; and the first Prime Minister of the Union Parliament was General Botha, who had led them against us in the field. Thus, if the war was indeed England's fault—and this, when all is said, is very doubtful—she has at least atoned for it by an act of generosity unparalleled in the history of the world.

In the opening days of 1901, and before the war was over, Queen Victoria died. She had maintained to the last her vivid interest in the affairs of State; and her wise discretion in the use of royal power had greatly endeared her to the people whom she ruled. Not without cause the wonderful developments which her long reign had witnessed were in some measure identified with her; and men felt prophetically that the great period of success which England had enjoyed during her lifetime might indeed be ended with the close of it. Nevertheless, whatever troubles were eventually in store, things for a while went well. The Queen was succeeded by her eldest son, King Edward, a popular sovereign and a master of diplomacy and tact. The Unionist Ministry, which had begun the war, saw it safely through to a successful end; indeed, the enthusiasm which the campaign aroused had enabled the party to secure a new lease of office. At the General Election of 1900—the Khaki Election it is often called—the rallying cry of the Empire and the Flag had

swept the polls; and the Unionists came back under Mr. Balfour's leadership with no insignificant majority. Great opportunities were opened out before them. They had appealed to the spirit of a united world-dominion; and the answer had surpassed their fondest hope. Not merely had the people of Great Britain shouldered with a will the heavy task they had undertaken in South Africa; but the great self-governing dependencies—Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Newfoundland—had stood by the mother-country at her need, proving their loyalty by the sacrifice of their sons. On such a foundation there was building to be done; but the responsibilities involved were great. One important problem soon emerged. The military needs of an Empire scattered broadcast through every quarter of the globe were thrown into a strong light by the events of the late war; and not unnaturally the great Dominions began to consider anxiously the question of defence. New Zealand and Australia were soon ordering battleships—a step of which Great Britain could scarcely but approve. Yet here was raised a problem which no one had thought out. If on their own initiative the Colonies prepare for war, on whose authority, it might be asked, do the Colonies then make it? The answer was, of course, that the Empire's foreign policy lay in the hands of England; but if England's authority could thus involve the Colonies, then it followed that clearly some political machinery was needed whereby to keep our Government acquainted with their views. Now, in point of fact, such machinery was growing, but it had not developed far. In 1887, the year of the Queen's Jubilee, a Colonial Conference was held in London, attended by the Premiers of the self-governing States and by representatives from India. The experiment was successful and the Conference was repeated, until now it has come to be regularly held at four year intervals. No steps, however, have as yet been taken to give this important body constitutional powers. Its discussions are to a large extent informal. Its decisions are not binding; and, whatever policies the delegates advise, it still rests with the British Government to

treat such recommendations as it pleases. Thus the self-governing rights of the Dominions remain still incomplete. In most important matters they are true masters of their destiny. They settle their own commercial tariffs; and in the business of taxation and administration we never interfere. Even the right to regulate the flow of immigration has been left to them; and the Australian Government, for instance, is determined to exclude yellow labour from their country. But in the all-important questions of peace and war the Dominions have, theoretically at least, no voice; and, as one colonial Premier has complained, he himself has had less say in the Imperial policy than if he had stayed at home as a citizen of England and exercised his Parliamentary vote.

Such then was the situation at the close of the Boer war. The opportunity was offered; but whether or no the time was ripe for setting up an Imperial Constitution is difficult to say. The Colonies themselves were jealous of their freedom and naturally averse to any binding system. Nor had any British statesman the strength or foresight to propose one. The only proposal made for giving greater cohesion to the Empire was conceived upon very different lines. The most forceful member of the Balfour Cabinet was Joseph Chamberlain, a clear-headed, eloquent, inspiring politician, but also by both origin and instinct a pushing business man. To his mind trade was the one essential link for binding the Colonies to England; and he accordingly advanced a thoroughgoing scheme by which to stimulate commercial intercourse within the Empire. By imposing protective duties on the mass of foreign imports, while allowing colonial products to pass in duty free, he hoped that the "Preference" thus accorded to the Colonies would induce them to trade more exclusively with us. The proposal caught the fancy of many Unionists; and, though Mr. Balfour was unwilling to declare himself, "Tariff Reform" became the party cry. The project was still under discussion when there fell the General Election of 1905. It there received its deathblow. From one end of the country to the other

the Unionists were routed; and the country's verdict was given with no uncertain voice. The explanation of its attitude is easy. Free Trade was the foundation on which our whole prosperity had hitherto been built. Protection, on the other hand, recalled the ugly memory of the Corn Laws and the days of the "Black Forties." The majority of Englishmen were unmoved by the advantage of extending Preferential treatment to the Colonies, if this meant at the same time that taxes would be levied on many of the staple necessities of life. They preferred Free Trade and a cheap loaf on their table to the less alluring prospect of a self-sufficient Empire and an expensive loaf. It was urged, as against this, that home industries would benefit by the foreigner's exclusion; but whether such would indeed have been the ultimate effect of Chamberlain's great scheme is for expert economists to judge; in any case the argument left the working classes cold. They would have none of it. Yet, perhaps deep down in the national intelligence there lay a more worthy, though unconscious, motive for the rejection of the policy. The defeat of the Unionists in 1905 marked a reaction against an Imperialism which had overreached itself. The war had roused a spirit which was out of keeping with the British character. There had been too much thumping, as it were, of the big drum, too much talk of the right of Englishmen to rule their fellow-men, and sentiments expressed too narrowly resembling the boast that Germans make of a "Kultur" to be imposed upon the world. The majority of Englishmen believed in the Empire and were grateful for its benefits; but they did not want an Empire aloof and self-contained, refusing, as it were, to make its contribution to the common stock of the world's prosperity and enterprise. In spite of all, we are a generous race and like to have free dealings with our neighbours—the more, since it is a policy which seems to pay. The Empire very rightly we have always insisted on regarding as a means, and not as an end. It has raised up many peoples from a low and barbarous standard of existence and has given them the chance to live at peace and live like

men. It has brought into being great and self-respecting States, modelled on the basis of those free institutions which we ourselves have so successfully evolved ; and, wherever our dependencies have proved fit to shape their destiny, we have been content to leave it largely in their hands, valuing for them the right of self-development which we have known to be so valuable to us. It is by continued loyalty to these ideals, and not by the artificial bonds of pure self-interest, that we and the Colonies shall hold together. For the British Empire could not have been won, far less could have been held, unless the spirit of a free and generous people had guided its destiny at every turn.

CHAPTER XV

THE RISE OF LABOUR

IT is hard to disentangle the affairs of a time so near to us as the years which intervened between the fall of the Balfour Ministry in 1905 and the outbreak of the war in 1914. It was a busy rather than an eventful period. No very momentous issues seemed at stake; yet England somehow was restless and ill at ease. The old complacent, comfortable days of the Victorian era were gone by; the great dominating figures—Gladstone in politics, Browning and Tennyson in letters, Ruskin in art—had vanished from the stage; and, as the complexities and problems of our civilization became more huge and overwhelming, individualities appeared to shrink. We felt that we were living in an age of little men; we accused ourselves of decadence, and declared that all ideals had been lost. Warnings of the impending German peril were disregarded. Politicians squabbled over what now seem foolish trifles. There was no clear vision; and it was hard to say what mattered or what did not. Nevertheless one fact seems pretty certain. The real outstanding feature of this decade was the emergence of the Labouring Man as a new political force. Hitherto, though normally dissatisfied and frequently rebellious, he had been for the most part inarticulate, or at any rate incapable of making his voice heard in the councils of the nation. To-day that voice has swelled in magnitude and violence, till it almost seems at times to drown all others. The rise of Labour has been swift indeed. For it was only in the years immediately before the war that the working man of England began at last to realize his

strength. In those years, whatever else may have been happening to obscure it, we seem to hear the first premonitory rumbling as of a giant awakened out of sleep.

Since the days of Chartism and the Anti-Corn Law movement there had been, as we may guess, enormous changes. The workers were no longer now regarded as a superior sort of animal, to be used much as animals are used and, if insubordinate, to be suppressed by force. The national conscience had been stirred from its indifference to the sufferings of the poor. Laws had been passed compelling masters to regard the health and safety, if not as yet the welfare, of their men. The ban upon Trades Unions had altogether vanished. Free education had given every one some chance to make his way; and by the extension of the franchise the majority of adults had secured the privilege of a Parliamentary vote. Poverty too was by now less universal. After the abolition of the Corn Laws the country had grown prosperous; and, although of course there had been ups and downs, the working class had reaped a certain share in that prosperity. If, perhaps, a third of them still hung upon the border-line of abject poverty, the average man was able now to live in a self-respecting fashion, and unusual skill could frequently demand a very substantial wage. But such improvement in the working man's condition did not by any means imply that he was satisfied. History has shown that it is not always the most wretched and down-trodden class which rebels most readily against its lot; on the contrary, it is the man who has already made some progress that realizes best how much remains to win and who reaches out for more. So the organization of the Labour movement has proceeded from the better paid workers who could afford to collect funds; and it has spread by a slow transition from the skilled minority to the great mass of the unskilled. Such organization has taken years to build. Since the repeal of the Combination Act in 1824 Trades Unions had, of course, existed in some form; but it was the greater liberty Disraeli gave them in 1875 which marked the true

beginning of their latter day success. In the last quarter of the century the number of the Unions was very nearly doubled. By the century's close their membership included perhaps two million men ; and within the next twelve years as many more were added. Meanwhile energetic war had been waged against employers ; and great strikes, such as the Dockers' Strike in 1889, had revealed the power which Labour, if united, could command. Nor had the old bitterness between men and masters been allayed by the gradual improvement in both wages and conditions. Indeed, if anything, the breach had widened, and this for various reasons. In the first place, our industries had so increased in scale that master and men were no longer on familiar terms of daily intercourse. In earlier times they knew each other well, and such knowledge contributed to a friendly understanding. But now the owner of perhaps a dozen factories stayed at his central office and seldom visited the works. So the human touch was lost ; and the system came to resemble a huge, impersonal, and implacable machine. Then again, while the working man was adding a few shillings to his wages, he was tantalized by seeing the big commercial magnate grow rich beyond all dreams. The fact is that the increased wealth which the community was enjoying was very unevenly distributed. " To him that hath shall be given " appeared to be the law of modern economics ; and the master of a coal-mine or a factory piled up his fortune by the simple process of accumulation, often through no industry or merit of his own. So the " Capitalist " class who owned this " Capital "—owned, that is to say, the machinery or plant by which raw material or manufactured goods could be produced—came soon to be regarded by the workers as a set of useless drones, privileged to control their labour and wax fat upon its proceeds by no other right than the mere title of possession. This right the working man now began seriously to challenge. He saw the great resources of the country—the coal-mines, the railways, the factories, and the rest—parcelled out, as it were, among a few rich men, and he himself excluded from

all share in their vast profits. He felt that the whole fabric of our modern industry, resting as it does upon the exclusive right of private ownership, had been built upon a wrong foundation. He began to ponder how the mistake might be corrected; and, once the idea was mooted of dispossessing the "Capitalist," theories began to rise about the uses to which Capital itself might in that event be put.

Such theories were not new. Men like Robert Owen had held views upon the subject in the first half of the century. A little later, the German Socialist, Karl Marx, had exercised a world-wide influence, predicting in fierce tones the inevitable fall of the capitalist, and heralding as a sure and certain fact an almighty revolution which should one day bring the workers to their own. In England (where Karl Marx eventually found harbourage) many earnest thinkers such as William Morris had propounded various schemes. By the beginning of the new century, however, two main schools of thought may have been said to hold the field; and between these two the British Labour leaders were divided. One group, and that the larger of the two, were Socialists in the true meaning of the term. They believed, in other words, that the ownership of "Capital" should be vested in the hands of the "Society" or State; that the mines, the factories, the railways, and even perhaps the land, should belong not to individuals, but to Government itself, and by Government should be administered, as the interest of the community dictates. Such "nationalization," as we should call it now, could either be accomplished by downright confiscation or by the more equitable process of buying the existing owners out. In whichever case the policy would involve no great or terrible upheaval; it would not even involve a break with the normal methods of Parliamentary government; and the great change would be effected under the guise of law. The Socialist group, in short, were for accomplishing their purpose by constitutional and not by revolutionary methods. The other group were of more extreme opinions. They held vaguely that the workers should *themselves* possess the

mines and factories they work. Syndicalists was the name these theorists sometimes went by; but into their camp were gathered all the various violent elements which made for the destruction of our existing institutions and for a clean cut with the past. Such men felt that to work for any master—were he private individual or Minister of State—was at best a demeaning task—a state of industrial slavery unhappily surviving when political slavery had long since been done away. Socialism proper would not, they realized, avail to terminate such slavery; for it would merely divert them from the service of their masters to the service of the State. These men's policy was, therefore, to press on the final issue between employers and employed—from strike to revolution, and from revolution to a form of society completely new, in which the workers would at length be true masters of their destiny, working no longer for a master's profits, but producing for their own benefit alone. Meanwhile, by dint of an organized campaign, they meant to push their wages up and up, until the capitalist's position should become untenable. Industrial action through the strike, not Parliamentary action through the ballot-box, was to them the only way.

Such, briefly, was the situation in the world of Labour when the General Election of 1906 took place. To the Constitutional or Socialist section of Labour it was a grand opportunity for making a big effort. The time indeed was ripe for a political campaign. Education had begun to take effect; the working man had come by now to realize the value of his vote; and, if votes alone were an index of success, the electioneering of the Socialist party was undoubtedly a triumph. Hitherto the true representative of Labour had been somewhat of a rarity in Parliament. Mr. Keir Hardie's uncompromising figure was regarded with amusement; and nobody had thought of taking such wild men seriously. But in the Election of 1906 many a seat was contested by official Labour candidates; and in the sweeping victory which the Liberal party won these Labour candidates enjoyed a generous share. Over fifty were

returned to Parliament, one section known as the Independent Labour party, being more or less definitely pledged to a policy of "Socialist" reform. Their number was, of course, comparatively small in a house six hundred and seventy strong. They were without experience in Parliamentary tactics; and their leader, Ramsay Macdonald, lacked a statesman's force. Nevertheless, from the start the Labour party's influence was felt; for, as luck would have it, the Liberal Government was sympathetically inclined. They were anxious to show that they too were representative of the People; and within the Cabinet itself there was more than one Minister who had the working man's cause very genuinely at heart. John Burns, the stalwart self-made man from Battersea, had been promoted to the Local Government Board; and more important still, though at that date less well known, there was the clever Welsh attorney, David Lloyd George, whom Campbell-Bannerman, the Liberal Premier, had picked out for his evident ability and put in office at the Board of Trade. Lloyd George's rise was miraculously swift. During the days of the Boer War he had made himself unpopular by questioning the justice of our case; and once at a public meeting held in Birmingham he had been forced to flee from the pursuit of infuriated patriots, disguised, so rumour had it, in policeman's clothes. Such moral independence proved at any rate his courage; and he was now to display other qualities besides. He possessed the imagination to conceive great measures, the doggedness to fight down opposition, and, above all, the eloquence to win support. On the platform his Celtic ardour glowed with the fierce energy of a man inspired. His racy rhetoric could touch the emotions of the most humdrum audience; and, lacking restraint, he was not always overscrupulous in his appeal to instincts and passions which are best ignored. When on Campbell-Bannerman's death in 1908 Mr. Asquith succeeded to the Premiership, Lloyd George was raised to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. His position in the Ministry, aided by the magnetic influence of his enthusiasm, served to carry the Liberal party forward

into unpremeditated paths. Had the Labour party itself come into office, it is scarcely likely that it would have effected more for the welfare of the masses ; and the House of Commons had a busy time.

The Legislation passed during these years covered a wide field ; but in essence nearly all of it was of a "Socialistic" type ; that is to say, it took out of the hands of individuals and placed under the authority of the State much that closely concerned the Englishman's daily life. In the national schools, for instance, finding that many of the pupils were but ill-provided for the midday meal, the Government devised a scheme for feeding them at public cost. Medical inspection of the children was also provided gratis ; and, to prevent unemployment, a system of Exchange Bureaux was started, for giving workmen information where employment may be found. All this was a very definite departure from the old Whig principle of *laissez faire*. But the eager Liberal Government had now whole-heartedly embraced the doctrine that the State should intervene in aid of those who cannot help themselves. Indeed, they were preparing to go further still ; for they adopted the much more disputable doctrine that, where the poor, as such, need helping, the rich, as such, should pay. In the past, of course, the rich had very substantially contributed to such national expenses as the upkeep of the schools ; but they contributed as citizens, and, as citizens, they were equally entitled, if they chose, to make use of the schools for their own children. Now, however, they were made to pay for what they could not share. In 1908 an Act was passed providing all old persons of seventy and upwards with a pension of five shillings every week. The funds came mainly from the rich man's pocket ; for of the poor no contribution was required. But only the poor could enjoy the benefits ; for, if the aged person had more than a trifling income, the pension was withheld. The critics of the measure called it pampering, and bewailed such a discouragement to individual thrift ; yet the reform had great advantages ; many deserving folk were saved from the indignity of ending their days in the

workhouse; and, if the principle of the law was novel, its effects were good. Still more was this the case with the Insurance Act of 1911. Here it was felt, and not without good reason, that the nation's health had hitherto received inadequate attention. Some, no doubt, among the working classes could afford to pay for doctoring. The more prosperous and prudent paid money to a club or common fund, on which, if they fell sick, they could draw to meet the doctor's bill. But there was a very large proportion of the working class which was not so insured; and the Liberals accordingly determined to make Insurance compulsory on all—that is, on all the poor. Every employed person was to pay a few pence weekly; every employer was to pay as much again; and the State would add its share. From this fund free medical attendance and sick pay were provided for the person so insured: and, though the scheme has drawbacks, there can be little doubt that thousands upon thousands have been saved thereby from permanent disablement or premature death. Perhaps, however, the most famous step in the “Socialist” direction was the Land Act framed by the Chancellor in the same year. It was an old complaint, as we have said above, that certain folk grew rich through the right of mere possession and through no merit of their own. If, for example, a man owned a plot of land upon the outskirts of a town, the value of his plot might well be trebled, when houses spread that way; yet he himself would have actually done nothing to deserve the “increment.” It was this unmerited or “unearned increment” that Lloyd George proceeded to attack, claiming for the Exchequer a percentage of the profit on the sale of such estates. He aroused a storm of protest. Proprietors throughout the country were naturally indignant and called him ugly names. But the Welshman's blood was up; and he proceeded to denounce the wealthy landlords for their selfish misuses of the nation's precious land. His scheme included a tax upon estates which had been left “undeveloped,” withheld, that is to say, from productive cultivation. Grouse moors, he maintained, should be put under the

plough instead of being wasted upon rich sportsmen's pleasure ; and he drew a lively picture of the available employment, should every park and flower-garden be converted into fields. In this Socialistic talk no doubt there was much exaggeration ; and the Chancellor's refusal of an extensive estate in Scotland, offered by a well-known peer on easy terms, disclosed the hollowness of his pretensions. Yet the discussion of the issue was vigorously pursued ; and Lloyd George pressed his case with a flood of giddy rhetoric. Very little money was brought into the Exchequer by the land taxation he applied ; but a deal of bitter feeling was aroused by his attempt to set the different classes of the community at variance. Such appeals to social prejudice as his notorious Limehouse speech have encouraged the poor to regard their richer neighbours as natural enemies ; and in later times it was to need all Lloyd George's eloquence to heal the discord fostered by the utterances of his less prudent days.

But of all the issues raised during these years the most fiercely and bitterly contested concerned the House of Lords ; and the most permanent achievement of the Liberal Ministry was to alter the fabric of the British Constitution. Throughout its lengthy history it has been an obvious, though unenviable, duty of the Second Chamber to act as a brake upon the impulsive legislation of the Lower House. By temper and by precedent the Peers are naturally conservative ; and in a sense it is their part to be so. To the Liberals, however, it was particularly galling to find their schemes frustrated and their reforms cut short by the veto of the Lords. Several Bills to which they had attached considerable importance were summarily dismissed, sometimes without debate. One, amongst others, for cutting down the number of superfluous public-houses was thrown out in 1908 ; and not without some justice it was felt that the rich brewers had used their influence to work up the opposition of the Lords. The climax came, however, when in the following year the Liberals' Budget met with the same fate. Such a step was without precedent ; for by long-established custom the right of taxation had become a privilege peculiar

to the Commons and a privilege with which the Lords had never interfered. On the other hand, if their action was unusual, the Lords could plead that the Budget in question was unusual too; for besides provision for the normal revenue it contained arrangements for Lloyd George's land taxation; and this, so the Lords argued, involved a new and fundamental change concerned not so much with revenue and taxes as with rights of ownership and principles of law. Argument, however, was of no avail. The patience of the Liberals was exhausted. They appealed in autumn to the verdict of the polls; and by a slender margin the nation backed them up. When they came back to Westminster at the beginning of 1910, they outnumbered the Conservatives by a majority of two. With the support, however, of the Labour party and the Irish Nationalists they could count on victory; and such support was certainly forthcoming. Yet there still remained a stern battle to be waged; and all through that spring and summer the controversy ran on. The Conservatives, who were in no mood for tame surrender, put forward alternative proposals. They maintained that the Liberals had been returned to Parliament on a variety of issues, and that to ascertain the people's genuine verdict on this one straightforward question a special vote or "referendum" should be taken. The Liberals, however, were most unwilling to surrender their advantage, and were now resolved that, come what might, the veto of the Lords must be somehow curtailed. In May King Edward, who had tried to mediate, broke down in health and died. Compromise was then seen to be impossible; and the Liberal Government pressed on a measure depriving the Upper House of its right of absolute veto, and allowing it merely to delay a Bill's enactment for a period of two years. This measure passed the Commons, and was sent up to the Lords; so on the Lords once more, as another year was ending, the eyes of all Englishmen were fixed. Would they gracefully consent to the passage of the measure and so sign their own death-warrant, or would they still refuse to bow the neck? They still refused;

and for the second time within a twelvemonth the Liberals appealed to the constituencies. The verdict given at the polls was just the same. The Liberals now came back in a majority of one, but confident of help, as upon the first occasion, from the Irish party and the Labour men. Mr. Asquith, moreover, held a weapon in reserve. Should the Lords continue their obstinate resistance, he was ready, like Lord Grey at the great Reform Bill crisis, to create new Peers in a sufficient number to swamp their opposition ; and, what is more, he had the King's assent. Then with infinite reluctance the Lords submitted to their fate. Some, vowing that to save the Constitution they would "die in the last ditch," stuck stoutly to their colours and cast votes against the Bill.¹ But the greater part, showing more dignity and prudence, stayed away ; and by seventeen votes in a half-deserted chamber the "Parliament Act" went through the House of Lords. Thus the Constitution, handed down through six long centuries, was destroyed within a year ; and the people's elected representatives became henceforward the sole sovereign power within the State. Yet common sense had not quite deserted us. The need for a Second Chamber was universally admitted ; and even the Liberals felt that, though shorn of its old powers, such a Chamber should at least command respect. Now, whatever might be said for the existing system of hereditary Peers, its weakness lay in the transparent fact that it represented no one ; and here, as the Conservatives themselves agreed, there was room for some reform. They therefore welcomed a hint contained in the preamble of the Bill, that at some future date the composition of the Upper House should be revised, and the system of nomination should be set, if possible, on a more representative basis. Ten years have passed ; nothing has been done, and the fulfilment of the pledge is long since overdue. Yet the strange thing is that the House of Lords is perhaps even more respected to-day than before the Act was passed.

¹ The Conservatives' dislike of the Bill was much intensified by the knowledge that the first use made by the Liberals of their victory would be to pass Home Rule for Ireland.

So complete a triumph was enough, one would imagine, to satisfy the most ardent apostle of democracy. The Labour party at any rate had good reason to be satisfied. 'In more ways than one the passage of the Bill was to them an earnest of victories yet to come. It had cleared away the most serious obstacle to their own revolutionary schemes. It had brought them more than ever into favour with the Government; for without their added vote the Liberal majority alone would scarcely have sufficed; and for the services thus rendered they now expected their reward. A further instalment of Socialistic legislation was in view. Yet, strange to say, at the very moment when their prospects seemed most bright, the Labour party found that it had lost the confidence of its own constituents. Working men throughout the country had seen with satisfaction the return of their candidates in 1906. They, too, had for the moment pinned their faith upon the efficacy of Parliamentary action; and they had hoped for great results. Five years had passed; and what after all was there to show for it? The hated Capitalist still ruled supreme. The Government had not thought fit to dispossess him of the railways or the mines; and, in the profits of industry which still went to swell his fortune, the working class themselves had got no share. Little wonder then that the rank and file of Labour were out of patience with the slow, unadventurous tactics of their representatives in Parliament. If constitutional action was so sadly ineffective, the second alternative was still waiting to be tried; and the mass of working-class opinion swung suddenly round towards the champions of the Strike. This vigorous faction had not meantime been idle. The organizers of the Trades Union movement had long since come to realize that in unity alone lay their prospect of success. Divided counsels spelt inevitable failure; if one set of miners struck, while others stayed at work, the issue was almost bound to go against them; and the Trades Unions therefore were making strenuous efforts to gain greater solidarity within their ranks. Since the beginning of the century much progress had been made. The mem-

bership, as we have said, had practically doubled ; and there was less danger now that the labour of non-unionists or "black-legs" would avail to break a strike. More important still, the various rival Unions had striven to compose their differences and work in unison. The separate societies of railwaymen, for instance, were now fused to form one whole. Similar amalgamation had taken place in other trades ; and, if the Union leaders thought fit to call a strike, they could now count with some reasonable assurance on paralysing their industry completely. Their power, in fact, was great ; yet, as the sequel was to prove, not so great as they imagined ; and their schemes in some directions outran all limits of the practical. One favourite project was to win all at a blow by the simple expedient of a "General Strike," in which every worker throughout the entire country would participate. In practice the scheme was little likely to succeed. The mass of Englishmen are too conservative for such adventures ; and the Unions were too jealous or suspicious of each other to combine. Failing this, it was still argued that, if one whole industry downed tools together, great results might be obtained, and, when the failure of the Labour men in Parliament had begun to bring discredit on the "Constitutional" party, the champions of industrial action recognized their chance. In 1911 a general strike of railwaymen was called. The men's leaders had claimed the right to treat with the Companies' Directors on questions of discipline and wages. The Directors had refused to accord the leaders such official recognition ; and, feeling the demand to be fully justified, the men came out *en masse*. For a few days the transport system of the country was almost at a standstill ; and no one could foretell what the end of it would be. It so happened, however, that at this very moment a serious foreign crisis intervened. War seemed imminent ; and an appeal to the patriotic feelings of the strikers brought them back at once to work. Their demand for "recognition" was eventually conceded ; and, though their strike had won no decisive triumph, the example of the railwaymen encouraged other

trades to follow suit. During the next three years the industrial world was in a ferment. Claim followed claim with bewildering rapidity; and nothing seemed to satisfy the men. The Government did what it could to mediate; but it seldom succeeded in keeping the peace. In 1912 alone more than eight hundred strikes took place, affecting a million and a half employees; and the total number of hours lost during the year ran to over forty million. Meanwhile, too, the Labour leaders were busy with fresh plans. Greater solidarity was still the cry; and shortly before the War an important step was taken towards the old ideal of the "General Strike." An alliance was struck up between three great bodies of industrial workers—the three most vital to the nation's daily life—the miners, the transport workers, and the railwaymen. In the event of one of these embarking on a strike, the other two were in a manner pledged to lend assistance; and, though it remained doubtful how far the men in practice would be willing to sacrifice themselves to help their colleagues, the leaders were intoxicated by a growing sense of the tremendous power they wielded. The outbreak of the war cut short for the time being their more ambitious projects; but in the long run it served the cause of Labour well. Wages mounted. Claims, hitherto rejected, were hastily conceded, as the only method of keeping the men at work; and Labour emerged from the prolonged ordeal in a far stronger position than before. Yet the Capitalist also was still strong. The extremists on both sides were still unsatisfied; and the struggle which was in progress when the war began was resumed with added vigour at its close. Masters and men have yet to learn that neither of them can prosper unless the other prospers too.

Troubles seldom, they say, come singly; and Labour unrest was but one of many difficulties which disturbed the peace of the Liberal Ministry during its later years. One constant source of annoyance was the Female Suffrage movement which was now gathering great force. Ladies, who for the most part came of well-to-do connections,

pressed their claim to share the vote with the zeal and fury of fanatics. From protest and agitation they passed to open violence. Ministers were waylaid ; public buildings set on fire ; and threats of still more vigorous measures filled the air. The patience of the policemen was severely taxed in dealing with these frenzied Amazons. Meetings in Trafalgar Square and other parts of London had to be broken up by force. Ringleaders were arrested in large numbers ; and some, to complicate their captors' task, attached themselves by chains to posts and railings. Once in prison, however, the Suffragettes were even more of a nuisance than when they were at large. Many went on hunger-strike and left the Government to choose between setting them at liberty and the more odious alternative of allowing them to die. Forcible feeding was tried ; but it was not a great success, and a middle course was taken. The hunger-strikers were released from jail when their symptoms grew alarming, and arrested again as soon as they were well. So the farce went on, till the war came and stopped the folly. The patriotic bearing of multitudes of women and the useful aid they rendered in the Red Cross or other services secured them in due course the just concession which their factious agitation had made it difficult to grant. In 1917 the franchise was extended to women over thirty, and six million fresh voters were thus added to the register. What effect this change may have on party politics is as yet an unsolved enigma ; but women's capacity to deal with public business becomes every year more evident. They have served on Government Committees, in the Civil Service offices, and in every department of local administration. Lady members have even been returned to Westminster ; and thus the sex which was once regarded as the chattel of the male has now attained an equal right with men to express its opinions and defend its rights.

One other problem—and that of more serious import—lay across the path of the harassed Liberal Government. When the Parliament Act was going through the Commons, the vote of the Irish Nationalists had been almost indispensable

to the Liberals' victory. But that vote was not given for nothing. A pledge had been exacted that, when the House of Lords was tamed, the Home Rule schème which nearly twenty years before the Lords' veto had frustrated should once more be revived; and now Mr. Redmond, the Nationalist leader, claimed the fulfilment of that pledge. The Liberals accordingly introduced a measure much on Mr. Gladstone's lines. It was proposed to establish a separate Parliament in Dublin which should deal with all lesser questions of Irish legislation, while the Parliament at Westminster (still containing Irish members) should keep entire control of foreign policy and regulate such matters as defence. Such a proposal was, of course, resisted by its traditional opponents. All the old objections which had been used in Gladstone's day were brought up and urged anew; but the Unionist opposition might argue themselves hoarse; they were overborne by numbers and it was now a moral certainty the Bill would pass. The House of Lords might delay it for a season; but they could do no more; and within a year or two (if the Liberals retained office) Home Rule would be a fact. The real question, therefore, was no longer whether Ireland would become self-governing, but what precisely would happen when she did.¹ That there would be serious trouble was not difficult to see. In each of the four provinces, but more particularly in the northern province, Ulster, there were still living the descendants of those Scottish and English settlers who had been planted there at various times gone by. These folk felt no desire to be governed by a Dublin Parliament, in which the majority was certain to be Catholic, and which, as they felt sure, would let slip no opportunity of making life intolerable for them. Unlike the native Irishmen, this Anglo-Scottish element was prosperous and industrious; the manufactures of Belfast and the north lay largely in their hands; and, seeing that Ireland in the main is agricultural, these manufactures formed no small proportion of the country's wealth.

¹ The Bill actually became law at the beginning of the war; but the situation in Ireland made it impossible to carry the law into effect.

The liveliest fears were therefore entertained lest under a jealous and revengeful Home Rule Parliament the north would be 'bled white by an oppressive and extortionate taxation. Rather than submit passively to such a fate the men of Ulster were prepared for anything. The old grim spirit of their Scottish ancestors lived on in these determined loyalists. "Ulster will fight," said a wise man in Gladstone's day, "and Ulster will be right." It looked, indeed, as though the prophecy were true. For aptly to the moment a leader had appeared. Sir Edward Carson, a well-known barrister and an astute Parliamentary hand, announced his intention of organizing the Ulstermen's resistance. Volunteers were called for; and the call was eagerly answered. Large bands paraded in the Belfast streets and drilled with dummy guns; and meanwhile more serviceable weapons were smuggled over in large quantities. This was a game, however, at which two could play; and, taking their cue from Sir Edward Carson's tactics, the Nationalists also began to drill their men. Thus, while the British Government was wondering how to stop these dangerous movements, Ireland itself was rapidly converted into two armed and hostile camps. Ulster was defiant and prepared. The Nationalist volunteers, though less efficient, were spoiling for a fight; and a single chance encounter might almost at any moment have plunged the country into civil war. At length the Liberal Government was roused to action and determined to disarm these amateur contingents. The intention was kept dark; but secret orders were conveyed to the commanders of the British regiments then stationed in the country. Suddenly in the spring of 1914 the public were startled by the alarming news that mutiny had broken out in the great Curragh camp. The fact was that certain officers, who had been ordered, as they understood, to march on Ulster, had refused point blank to move; and, rather than assist to put down a loyal cause with which they fully sympathized at heart, they preferred to abandon their commissions. All England was thrown into a flutter of excitement. The discipline of the army was seen to be

at stake. Generals resigned, Ministers prevaricated ; and those who were thought to have issued the original instructions were bitterly assailed. Then, just when 'men were speculating whether Civil War would follow or the Liberal Ministry would fall from power, the storm-cloud which had been lowering over Europe broke and Armageddon was upon us. In those anxious months of autumn, when England's very existence seemed to hang upon a thread, the Irish imbroglio was naturally forgotten. It would have been well, as subsequent events have proved, had we also possessed the courage to forgive. One generous gesture at that crisis of our fate might well have earned us the Irishman's eternal gratitude ; and a measure of Home Rule which to-day would content no one might then have achieved success such as scarcely the most sanguine among Englishmen dared hope. But, as often before, the Liberal Government faltered. Mr. Asquith, with all his skill in Parliamentary tactics and his lawyer's gift for lucid argument, was not the man to run great risks for an ideal. In the phrase which he himself so often used, he preferred to "wait and see ;" and the opportunity was lost.

CHAPTER XVI

THE YEARS BETWEEN

IN the European history of the last half-century two dates will stand conspicuous—1871 and 1914. In 1871 arose the German Empire, the consummation of Bismarck's strong diplomacy, built upon the ruins of defeated France. In 1914 that Empire's whole existence was staked upon a challenge issued, like Napoleon's, to the rest of Europe for the world's supremacy at arms. In the years between—four-and-forty years of peace which was no peace—was forged the terrible instrument fit to deliver such a blow and the national spirit which, when the time came, should have the hardihood to use it. Directly, at least, Bismarck was not responsible. The object of his aggression having been achieved in the overthrow of France, he was content to let well alone and to maintain by a defensive policy the great place that Germany had won. The defeated enemy was allowed no opportunity of raising up her head, much less of taking her revenge, and more than once in the years following Sedan, when her recovery appeared to him too perilously rapid, Bismarck threatened her with fresh invasion. He was warned off by England; and thereafter he made shift to hold France down by the less brutal, but scarcely less effective, method of keeping her in political isolation. Russia, of all the Powers, was her most likely friend; but German diplomacy had many shifts, and the Tsar was not difficult to manage. Bismarck humoured him, and made him see that his own interests as a despot were closely interlinked with those of his fellow-despot on the Prussian throne. But, although this secret understanding

with St. Petersburg dispelled the likelihood of a Russo-French alliance, yet Bismarck was well aware that the Tsar's favours were at best precarious; and he did not scruple to use the Russian bogey as a means of securing for his own country a more staunch and serviceable friend. By playing on old fears of her big, restless neighbour, he compelled Austria more and more to lean on Germany; and in 1879 a pact for mutual aid against the Russian menace was arranged between Vienna and Berlin. It remained to entice Italy within the circle; and by setting her at loggerheads with France over North Africa this equally was done. In 1882, therefore, a "Triple Alliance" was concluded; and Germany and Italy and Austria, though apparently predestined, by every circumstance of history and tradition, to perpetual feud, were thus by Bismarck's incomparable diplomacy knit in one solid block. The Balance of Power was thereby redistributed; but the Chancellor's achievement, while confirming the preponderance of Germany in Europe, made at least for the security of Europe's peace. For twenty years the helplessness of France and the cautious self-restraint of German policy encouraged hopes of a lasting equilibrium. Then in a twinkling all was changed. In 1888 William I of Prussia died. His successor, Frederick, mounted to the throne a doomed and dying man. A brief hundred days of rule and he was gone. His son William II, a young man of nine-and-twenty, reigned in his stead; and among the first foolish acts of a long and foolish reign was the dismissal of the man who had made Germany great. Like George III, William was determined "to be King." He refused to be Bismarck's or anyone's disciple. So, without as much as thank you, he dropped "the Pilot" overboard and himself stood to the helm.¹

The Kaiser William was a man of many qualities. He could make a speech, paint a picture, or compose a military march. His imagination, though impetuous, was fertile.

¹ Recent disclosures, however, have shown that the fault was not all on one side, and that the stubbornness and pride of Bismarck were in part responsible for the breach.

He would have cut a figure in any walk of life. But the desire to cut a figure proved, in fact, to be his curse. He was for ever acting to a part, and, whatever were that part, he overdid it. Was a battle to take place upon manœuvres, he must needs appear to lead the cavalry in person, got up for the occasion in a uniform most carefully selected from the three hundred stocked in his capacious wardrobe. Admiral or orator, connoisseur or statesman, he took up every rôle with a vainglorious gusto, which made the wiser Germans laugh. But, unhappily, the rôle which he himself most fancied, and for which at the same time he was most ludicrously unfit, was one which flattered the national conceit and compelled the admiration of his servile folk. No mere play-actor can dominate the universe; yet such was the aspiration of this man. "Nothing," he once said, "shall hereafter be settled in the world without the intervention of the German Emperor;" and to this the German people echoed a proud assent. It was barely twenty years since they had become a nation; yet already they were conscious of a great and glorious destiny. Their numbers were fast increasing—from barely forty millions in 1871 to nearly half as many again before the century's close—and a forceful foreign policy was therefore not unnatural to a race endowed with all the ambition and energy of youth. The fact is that even before the accession of the Kaiser such a policy had been resolutely urged, and in Bismarck's day—though against Bismarck's better judgment—bold projects had been laid for expansion overseas. It was the time when Africa was being opened up; and no sooner were the continent's resources brought to light than every State in Europe fell to scrambling for its share. The Belgians were on the Congo; the Portuguese had stations on the south-east and south-west coasts; France aspired to manage the entire north-west; and we ourselves were well established both in Egypt and at the Cape; the German Government, therefore, not to be outdone, had also staked off its claim. In 1883 a large strip of the west coast, adjoining what was soon to become British Bechuanaland, had

been occupied by German pioneers. Next year upon the Gold Coast they gained a further footing in Togoland and in the Cameroons. These Colonies were exploited with the thorough-going industry so characteristic of all German State-run enterprise. What was less meritorious, if not less typical, the native inhabitants were brutally maltreated; and, since these lands were ill-adapted to extensive emigration, the undertaking was at most a very qualified success. The young Kaiser, however, did not see it in that light. He simultaneously boasted of what empire he possessed and chafed under the sense of its comparative insignificance. Of the British world-dominion he was, of course, supremely jealous; but his direct antagonism was reserved for France. The free hand allowed her on the north-west coast of Africa seemed to him an unfair bar to the claims of German expansion; and in 1905 he made a dramatic coup. Landing from his yacht on the Moroccan seaboard, he promised the natives to safeguard their threatened freedom. France boiled at the insult; but, not daring to make war, she submitted the question to a Conference of the Powers. The verdict given at Algeciras was a compromise. The Moroccans' liberty was guaranteed; but France was permitted to police their towns. The Kaiser was disappointed; but six years later he returned to the attack. On the plea of suppressing unrest among the natives, the French had occupied the town of Fez. The counter-stroke was startling. A German gunboat was ordered to put in at Agadir as an avowed preliminary to making it a German naval base. France alone was scarcely able to withstand the threat; but on this occasion Great Britain took her part. Our Grand Fleet was put in readiness; and only the unwillingness of either side to fight availed to bring the issue to a peaceful settlement. Thus once again the Kaiser had been foiled; and in Africa at any rate his Imperial aspirations had suffered a rude check. But there are other countries in the world than Africa; and already for some time an alternative outlet for German enterprise had been in contemplation.

Nothing perhaps has given more amazing proof of the German nation's energy than the rapid extension of their foreign trade. Within a few years the Fatherland had been developed from an agricultural country into a throbbing hive of manufacture. Cheap products "made in Germany" flooded the world's markets. German merchantmen and liners thronged the seas; and the vigorous enterprise of German agents pushed trade in every continent. One special sphere of activity, however, attracted the eye of their ever-watchful Government. While Africa engrossed the other Powers' attention, the Middle East had hitherto been scarcely broached. Yet Mesopotamia was a fertile field for commercial exploitation; and the only serious bar to its development was the conservative habit of the Turk. To win the Turk's approval was, therefore, among the Kaiser's most dearly cherished schemes. In the first year of his reign he had visited the Sultan. He visited him again in 1898; took an official tour through Palestine; made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem itself; and then astounded Christendom by proclaiming in loud tones his eternal friendship for the Mussulman. The way being thus prepared, the scheme was launched. A railway was projected across Asia Minor, through the Taurus mountains, to the city of Bagdad. The Turk was willing; and grand prospects opened out—of wealth to be gotten from the fertile plains, of bases to be established on the Persian Gulf, and eventually perhaps of a bid for British India and a challenge to our whole Empire in the East. Meanwhile in Europe all favoured the design. Ferdinand, King of Bulgaria, was a German born; and he gladly allowed free passage through his country to the trunk route connecting Constantinople and Berlin. Austria, for her part, was assisting in the project. The extension of her influence among the Balkan States was for her no novel policy; she had long kept a jealous eye upon these weak and helpless neighbours; and in 1908, to the dismay of Serbia, she had annexed Herzegovina and Bosnia at a blow. Who next would be her victim was not difficult to guess; for the

Kaiser was behind her and his aim was pretty clear. The "Germanization" of the Balkans was, in fact, an essential part of the general "eastward push;" and upon this very issue, as we know to-day, hung the fate not of a railway nor of a few small States, but of the world itself.

Had the Kaiser's high ambitions been pursued by peaceful methods, it would be hard to condemn them as wholly illegitimate; but that was not his way. He always thought, and more often than not talked, in terms of armaments and wars. His Germany stood forth as a competitor for power arrayed in "shining armour." His diplomatic coups were never veiled in decent cunning; they were blatant demonstrations of the might of the "mailed fist." Nor was this braggart talk mere empty boasting. Germany, beyond a doubt, was strong for war. Her army since its celebrated triumph over France was admittedly the finest in the world; and it did not stand alone. For side by side with it the Kaiser had built up a formidable fleet. The defence of German commerce was the motive he alleged; but, such pretences notwithstanding, it was clear that his real objective lay on this side the North Sea and that the growing German Navy was a challenge to our own. Kindred preparations were meantime pushed on apace. Heligoland, which we had captured in the Napoleonic wars, but restored to its natural owners by Lord Salisbury in 1890, was rapidly converted into a fort of monstrous strength. Hard by through the neck of Schleswig-Holstein was dug the Kiel Canal, which, when completed, would allow the Kaiser's battleships to concentrate at will in the North Sea or the Baltic. By now, moreover, the number of those ships was no longer insignificant; and there were more to come. When we built the Dreadnought in 1906,¹ the German Admiralty was not slow to follow suit; and the programme of construction aimed at three and thirty iron-clads to be launched by 1912. Such schemes, in addition to the upkeep of their army, cost the German people dear; but they bore the heavy burden with a cheerful pride. Bismarck had taught them to believe in "blood and iron;" and under the

¹ The reorganisation and strengthening of the British Navy during these years was due mainly to the genius and energy of Lord Fisher.

Kaiser's influence the militarist spirit had taken deeper root. The protest of Socialists and Liberals availed nothing; the electoral system (as was explained above) gave little chance in Parliament to the people's representatives; and the aristocratic "Junkers," whose position was dependent on the Crown's supremacy, backed their beloved Emperor's policy through thick and thin. So the militarist ideal caught the nation in its grip. The past record of German prowess was extolled with giddy fervour; history was distorted to prove that might was right; and the children in the schools were brought up to the refrain of "Deutschland über Alles." The discipline of the army, in which all German manhood served its apprenticeship to war, was gradually strengthened. The military caste of well-born officers grew every year more arrogant; they would shoulder even women off the pavements where they strutted; and when a young lieutenant cut down a mere civilian for laughing at his antics, the higher authorities applauded and condoned. It was clear, in short, that, if the Kaiser talked of using the "mailed fist," there was a terrible reality behind the threat. We have come now to think of war as an almost unqualified disaster; but to a large number of Germans it was then the very goal and summit of life's purpose and the only true adventure which could call forth the best qualities in man. They believed that struggle was the very salt of life; and many, looking forward to the inevitable conflict which should prick the empty bubble of the British world-supremacy, made sure that German hardihood would outmatch the degenerate foe, and toasted with enthusiasm the coming of "the Day."

To neighbouring Powers meanwhile these noisy preparations were the cause of sincere and justifiable alarm. France, in particular, lived in a constant panic. Her recovery from the defeat of 1870 had been slow. Internal dissensions between Republicans and Royalists, the factious agitations of anti-clerical reformers, and the unsavoury intrigues of powerful Jewish financiers had kept her perpetually upon the rack; while Bismarck's skilful shepherding of Europe had

left her, as we saw, without a friend. Once Bismarck was removed, however, she was quick to seize her chance. In 1894 she made a bid for Russian sympathy; and shortly after a regular alliance was struck up between the two. But this was not enough. French nerves were still disquieted; and towards England also a feeler was thrust out. Our traditional policy of isolation, begun by Canning in pre-Victorian days, was, of course, the most serious obstacle to a definite understanding between ourselves and France. We had no desire to be entangled in her quarrels; and for various reasons, as has been shown above, our sympathies lay rather with the Germans than with her. But the events of the Boer war awoke us to a sense of our own military weakness and of the growing hostility displayed beyond the Rhine. Alarmed by Germany's ascendancy, King Edward undertook a complete reversal of our previous foreign policy. The fruit of his diplomatic efforts was the Franco-British "Entente" of 1904; and, although no pledge was given that our army would be sent to fight abroad, yet morally at least we were henceforward bound to stand against Germany with France. Apart from this, however, our attitude was undeniably pacific. Lord Roberts's appeal for a modified conscription was treated with contempt. To the speeding-up of the German naval programme we replied with a suggestion for restricted armaments. But countered, as they felt, in Europe and balked in the colonial field, the Germans were growing nervous. With Russia on the east of them, with France upon the west, and with England, as it were, astride the seas, they felt themselves encircled by a ring of enemies and suspected a deliberate conspiracy of the Powers to crush their rising strength. So their war-like preparations were redoubled; and a tense atmosphere of scarcely veiled hostility crept over the whole continent. If the "Triple Entente" between England, France, and Russia had been the outcome of an honest apprehension, the Powers of the "Triple Alliance" (or, since Italy was lukewarm, the two more powerful of them) were scarcely less convinced that an attack on them was brewing, and that

their preparations were required in self-defence. At each fresh crisis of international dissension, the omens became more and more alarming. The blood of France was up. She had never quite forgotten her old longing for revenge ; and the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, her two precious Rhineland provinces, still rankled. After the German Emperor's coup at Agadir, when the world's peace for a moment had hung trembling in the balance, she was more alarmed than ever ; and in 1913 she resolved on a new measure of precaution. A sudden blow was what she feared ; and, to multiply the forces which should be ready to receive it, she now extended the period of her conscripts' service from two years into three, thus increasing the number of those under the colours by one half. Simultaneously the Kaiser made additions to his army ; and so the frenzied race ran on. Efforts were made by Mr. Asquith's Government to arrive at some more friendly understanding ; and even in Germany there were many who refused to believe in the necessity of war. One thing is certain ; their voice was never heard or, if heard, was disregarded at the Kaiser's council board. The military chiefs were stronger than a pacific Chancellor, and the Kaiser was under their thumb. The nation, assured of its superiority to others, believed its legitimate ambitions to have been thwarted, its very existence perhaps to be in danger. In such an explosive state of affairs a mere spark would be enough to start a conflagration.

Serajevo to the Fourth of August—Given that trouble was somewhere to arise, it was not difficult in 1914 to choose the spot. During recent years, as in others more remote, the Balkan States had been the storm-centre of Europe. Since their emancipation from the Sultan's yoke, these States had not grown less bellicose nor more friendly to the Turk ; and towards the end of 1912 they had all fallen in a body on their old oppressor and compelled him to disgorge almost all the territory he still possessed this side the Bosphorus. That done, they fell to quarrelling over the division of the spoils ; and in a second war which followed Greece, Serbia, Turkey herself, and

eventually Rumania too, combined for the undoing of Bulgaria. Now to the two Central Powers at any rate all this was most unwelcome; and the defeat of their friend the Turk, closely followed by the humiliation of Bulgaria and her pro-German King, was a distinct set-back to their own Balkan plans. * Austria, acting largely on instructions from Berlin, was still pursuing the old aim of extending her influence towards the south; and there could be no more serious obstacle to her design than an enlarged and powerful Serbia. For Serbia was no willing tool to Austria's policy; on the contrary, she had bitterly resented within the last few years the seizure of Herzegovina and Bosnia; and the alienation of these two kindred Slav communities she still regarded as a blight on her own national ambitions. She may or may not have entertained some hope of their recovery; but it was not long before a malicious fate gave the Austrians some chance of pretending that she did. About the midsummer of 1914 the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Emperor's throne, was paying Bosnia an official visitation, when at Serajevo—a name now of evil memory—he was shot dead in the open street by a political assassin. With more subtlety than justice, the Austrian Government at once declared that the criminal was the agent of a Serbian plot and called upon the Serbian authorities to expiate the deed. Investigations entirely failed to substantiate the charge. But fortified by crazy messages of encouragement from the Kaiser, Count Berchtold, the Austrian Foreign Minister, presented Serbia with an ultimatum, the terms of which meant nothing less than political subservience. Forty-eight hours were given for an answer; and though even within that time the greater part of her demands were yielded, Austria declared war on 28 July. Thus pressed, the Serbs appealed to their old champion Russia; and the Russian military staff, by no means averse to war, insisted on mobilisation—a fatal step; for Germany cried out that she was threatened, and the mobilisation of her troops, though not formally ordered, was unostentatiously begun. The Kaiser, indeed, though he had been eager

enough to bully Serbia, was now appalled at the prospect of a general European conflagration, and implored the Tsar to stay his hand. Such action came too late; the military authorities at Berlin were working in a contrary direction, and they carried the day. All invitation to delay or compromise was ignored; and England's suggestion of a Conference of Powers was swept aside; and, though a state of war was not actually declared till the opening days of August, the mobilization of the German, Austrian, French, and Russian armies precluded all prospect of a bloodless settlement. Italy, maintaining that this at least was no "defensive" war, refused to be bound by the terms of her alliance and held sullenly aloof. All eyes now turned to watch the attitude of England. Few men doubted in their hearts that we were bound to stand by France; yet the precise nature of our obligations remained a mystery. The Liberal Cabinet was resolved to keep the peace at almost any price; and Sir Edward Grey, our Foreign Minister, though rebuffed in all his efforts at conciliation and himself by now convinced of Germany's bad faith, was still without such proof as might convince the doubters that we could not stand aside.¹ Then on a sudden, with that curious knack they have of completely misunderstanding the Englishman's psychology, the Germans themselves committed the one act which was certain to arouse us. They called on the Belgian Government to give passage for their troops. Now about eighty years before, as the reader will remember, the various Powers of Europe had pledged their solemn word to observe and to preserve the neutrality of Belgium. In 1870 that pledge had again been ratified; yet to Bethmann-Hollweg, the German Chancellor, considerations of strategy now bulked more large than the maintenance of honour; and, declaring that "necessity should know no law," he spurned the historic document which his countrymen had signed, as

¹ Sir Edward Grey was in a difficult dilemma. He did not wish, of course, to desert France at her need; but he was conscious that a promise of support might make France and Russia more determined upon war and so might diminish the chances of peace.

an obsolete, unmeaning "scrap of paper." That was enough; the wavering of England ended sharply; and from midnight of the 4th of August we also were at war. That we had entered the arena with clean hands and for the just vindication of an ancient pledge flattered not a little the sentimental side of our people's character. Belgium, it was felt, had deserved well of Europe in standing by her duty; and to champion her distress was no less a chivalrous than a legitimate undertaking. Yet, truth to tell, we could have had no choice. No hostile Power has ever held, nor could hold, the opposing Flanders coast without grave prejudice to our national security. Whether or no the majority of Englishmen were conscious of the fact, a challenge had been offered which something more than the obligations of our honour compelled us to accept; and from the very first moment that we entered on the four years' struggle, nothing less than the Empire's existence was at stake. Yet, strange as it may seem, our act inspired in the Germans a wild ecstasy of hatred: they had counted on the benevolent neutrality of England, and—England (so they verily believed) had played them false!

CHAPTER XVII

THE GREAT WAR

I

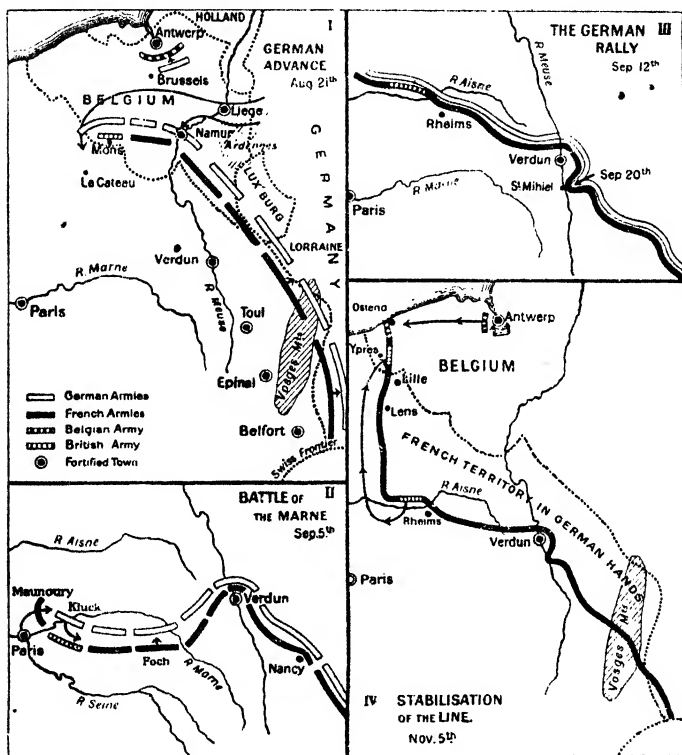
THE advantage of a preparation secretly conducted through none knows how many years, the immense superiority of their initial concentration, outnumbering the French by nearly three to two, above all, perhaps, the military tradition which had taught their generals to lay plans before all else for a swift and crushing blow—these were factors which made it well-nigh certain that the offensive would come from the enemy and that it would come in the west. Well knowing that many months must pass before Russia's millions could be brought into the field, and confident meanwhile of holding her easily in play, the German High Command had very naturally determined to throw the full weight of their attack on France. So much indeed might have been shrewdly guessed beforehand ; yet secrecy in warfare is nine points of strategy ; and until the last moment it remained in doubt at what precise point the main thrust would be delivered. It might, on the one hand, fall, as it had fallen in the 1870 campaign, somewhere along the true Franco-German frontier, between the Ardennes of Belgium and the southern limit of the Vosges. There, as was obvious, the German forces could be mobilized in the closest proximity to their objective ; but there too, not wishing to be caught a second time, the French had prudently constructed a long line of powerful forts, heavily gunned and armoured in the modern fashion, from Verdun to Belfort. To force a way through these would be at best

a perilous and lengthy business ; and, if the Germans therefore should decline the task, there remained a second alternative, opened to them by their deliberate departure from their treaty pledge, of a flank attack through Belgium. There, in the north, where their frontier marched with Flanders, the French possessed no true defensive line. Such fortresses as they had built were feeble. Natural barrier, whether of river or of mountain, there was none. They had therefore to decide between massing to meet the Germans in this quarter, while leaving the east frontier to the protection of the forts, or the more risky alternative of making doubly sure of the east frontier and treating the threat through Belgium as mere bluff. Their decision, as the sequel proved, was wrong ; and, while they were conducting two misconceived offensives among the Saar valleys¹ and in the lowlands of Alsace, the Germans were gathering in overwhelming numbers upon the ill-protected frontier of the north. A slight check indeed they there encountered in the heroic resistance of the Belgians at Liège ; but, though they failed to rush the fortress, a siege-artillery of unprecedented power soon battered it to pieces. Namur, a second stronghold, fell more quickly. The Belgian Army was driven back on Antwerp. The Belgian people were cowed into submission by a calculated policy of murder and rapine ; and, over the level plains where harvest was still gathering, the German host, like some monstrous piece of mechanism, accurate in movement, irresistible in numbers, swept southward upon France.

This initial miscalculation on the Allies' part was worse than a disaster, it was almost fatal. To stem the onrush for more than a bare moment was wholly beyond the power of the inadequate contingents which the French had posted on the Sambre ; and Joffre, their *generalissimo*, had little choice but to order a retreat of the whole northern line. The extreme-left of that long line, at Mons, was held by

¹ This offensive did indeed aim at breaking in upon the German bases (such as Metz) and thus obstructing the enemy's liberty of attack.

the British Expeditionary Force of five¹ regular divisions under General Sir John French; and upon them, as was incidental to the post they occupied, fell the brunt of that memorable retirement. The German sweep drove down at



THE AUTUMN CAMPAIGN OF 1914.

a tremendous pace and in overpowering numbers; and to escape the instant threat of their envelopment our army was compelled to show swift heels. Incredible feats of marching were accomplished. Under the scorching suns

¹ The Sixth Division joined them at Le Cateau during the retreat.

and steady moons of that high August our men raced grimly southward, staggering under their packs, blistered by the hard French *pavés*, blinded with the dust, without sleep for days together, often without food. Regiments lost touch; divisions were parted; and panic-stricken journalists wrote home that all was over. But they were wrong. The marvellous discipline of our professional soldiers survived that most searching of all tests. The line was nowhere enveloped nor permanently severed. Rear-guard actions were successfully maintained and more than once—notably at Le Cateau, where Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien took the hazard on himself—we turned on our pursuers and obtained some respite by the blows we struck. At length below the River Marne, some twenty miles east of Paris, we halted sorely shaken, exhausted, but intact. At the same moment the French line, which had fallen back along with us, had equally received Joffre's orders to stand fast; and at that same moment also the Germans committed the great blunder which saved us and ruined them. That horn of their wide sweep which was attempting to envelop us was commanded by a capable commander named von Kluck. Hitherto he had been reaching continuously south-westwards in the effort at encirclement; but, confronted as he now was with the fortress works of Paris which afforded timely shelter to our threatened flank, he desisted from the effort and with singular audacity changed the whole direction of his march. Assuming that in its demoralized condition the force he had pursued might be ignored, he swerved away from Paris and passing south-east along the British front struck down towards the French centre, which he fancied thus to break. But he was in double error. Not merely was there fight still left in our contingent; but the French line was far more strong than he supposed.¹ The forces which Joffre had thrown into the battle were not all he had

¹ The Germans knew, of course, the approximate strength of the French armies; but they did not know their actual dispositions. In particular they were led astray by the magnificent defence of Nancy, which was held against a strong attack by a comparatively small French force.

in hand. A large reserve was being kept against the moment for which his counter-stroke was timed; and that moment at last had come. The centre which to Kluck appeared so vulnerable was reinforced by Foch. Out of Paris, and so close upon Kluck's rear, issued Maunoury's new army, the very existence of which was till now quite unsuspected. Kluck was caught in an awkward situation. Threatened in his turn by Maunoury's envelopment, he turned upon his tracks to beat it back. In this he was successful; but by his swift return he had in fact degarnished the German centre, leaving thin places where the French might penetrate. Foch, with rare instinct, divined the opportunity. Joffre had given the order to attack; and, after the long discouragement of their enforced retreat, the French hailed the chance with rapture. Not an inch of ground did they yield further, but grappled to the enemy like grim death. Three days the battle swayed. On the fourth, Foch found his breach; and then with a final thrust the French were through. Pierced at this vital point, the German front collapsed; and they began to scuttle northward for dear life. After them pell-mell went the victorious allied line. Sir John French and our men recrossed the River Marne; and the pursuer now was in his turn pursued. At one moment it appeared as though von Kluck might be outflanked; and had General Maunoury possessed more patience and delayed his stroke till later, such might indeed have been the case. As it was, the Germans, though with great loss of men and guns, made good their passage of the River Aisne. On the north bank of that river they ensconced themselves in a strong entrenched position, which, neglecting no precaution even at the height of their success, their sappers had meanwhile been busily constructing. Against this our men's pursuit broke ineffectual, and, although we crossed the river, we were held. Hitherto, throughout three weeks of open warfare, the battle-line had been in a constant state of flux; now, however, as first the Germans, then the Allies went to ground, it crystallized into a permanent trench system. Passing along the heights which

overlook the Aisne, it skirted the north of Rheims and ran east towards Verdun; then bending sharply round that fortress it set south along the Vosges and through Alsace, till the Swiss frontier brought it to an end. This line—two arms as one might say, of an inverted L—remained to all intents and purposes unaltered during the next four years of fighting; and thus, although at the Marne France had parried successfully the blow which would else have reached her vitals, the instrument which dealt it was left, as it were, still embedded deeply in her side. For behind the Germans' battle-line—hostage, so to speak, of their initial victory—lay a huge cantle of French soil. It was a cruel wound, not merely because so many thousand Frenchmen were thus left at the mercy of an inhuman conqueror, but also because within the captured area was comprised not the least important of the French industrial districts. The inevitable loss of many mines and factories in the populous neighbourhoods of Lille and Lens severely crippled, though it did not incapacitate, the munitioning activities of France. That was the price she paid for early failure.

The first phase—the phase of open warfare—was now over; but, though the battle-front was stabilised when it reached the River Aisne, it was not complete until it should reach the sea. In the second phase this gap, a full hundred miles in breadth, was waiting to be bridged; and upon the outcome of this phase hung many vital issues, not least the fate of the precious Channel ports. From the first it was a race in reinforcement. Whichever side could anticipate the other in bringing fresh men into the field would inevitably outflank and so bend back the opposing battle-line. With the advantage of their shorter and (what perhaps mattered more) undamaged communications, the Allies had the better of the race, and were thus enabled to direct the lengthening line continuously northwards. As other sections of the front were duly trenched, it became possible to man them with inferior numbers, and the men thus spared were rapidly transported to the more critical

scene of action in the north. The crowning success in this method of reinforcement was the wholesale transference of the entire British Army from its post in the Aisne Valley to the Franco-Belgian border. By the middle of October our men were setting foot for the second time on Belgian soil. It was not much of Belgium, however, that we were able to recover; and about this very moment, what was left of its own defenders stood in imminent peril of complete reduction. The Belgian Army, as we saw above, had fallen back in August upon Antwerp. There they held on until after the Marne battle the Germans undertook to press the siege in earnest. Huge guns were brought to bear upon the outer forts and shattered them to ruins. The town itself was soon in flames; and only by swift retreat, while an exit still remained to them, did the surviving Belgian forces escape capture. Under the sheltering rear-guard of our Seventh Division, transported from England expressly for the purpose, they were brought in safety to the Flemish coast; and with their coming the extension of our battle-front from the Aisne valley to the sea was finally completed. But, though complete, our line had still to prove that it could hold. At points indeed it was perilously thin; and, when in late October the enemy determined to break through and win the Channel ports, our chances of repelling him seemed small. Round Ypres, to which we clung for sentimental reasons, a three weeks' battle raged. More than once the Germans were within a touch of victory; but our men hung grimly on—sheltered in water-logged, unwholesome trenches, deluged with shell-fire to which they could scarcely answer, seldom relieved for days and days together, and subjected all this while to massed assaults of increasing German numbers. It was a miracle they held; but hold they did; and at length the foe desisted. Winter drew on; and both sides settled down to endure the miseries and improvise the tactics of a novel type of war. The trenches, often but a few score yards apart, were divided only by the wire entanglements set up by either side. Mortars and machine guns kept up short range bombardments.

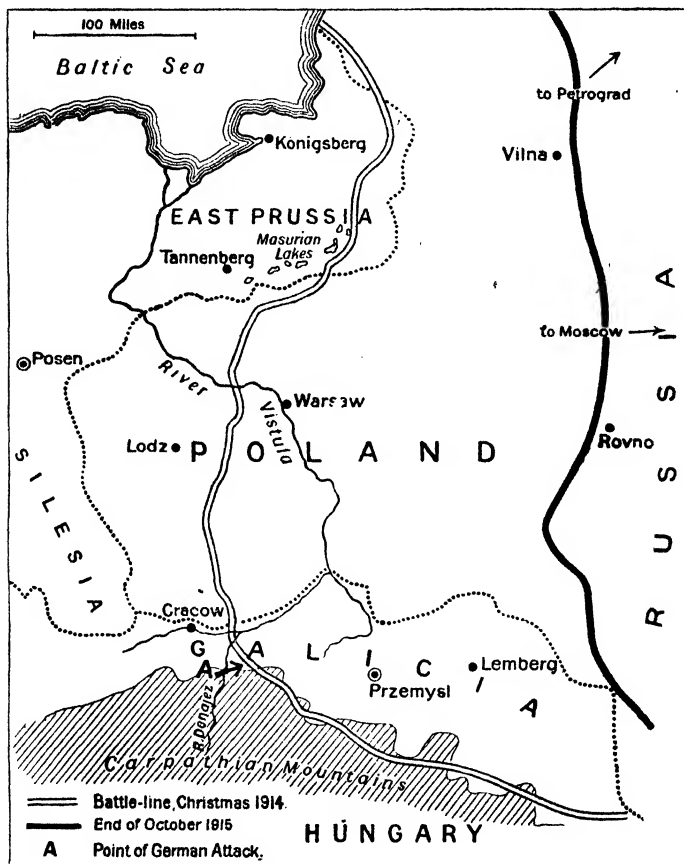
Howitzers and the rest played havoc from the rear ; and meanwhile the wretched victims of this twofold devilry stood up to their waists in water day and night, scanning the mists for a sign of creeping figures or piling sand-bags on the broken breastworks beneath which rotting corpses lay. Holding as they did the higher ground, the Germans enjoyed a physical advantage ; and in every type of munition and equipment they outmatched ourselves completely. For three following winters the same terrible ordeal lay before our men ; and, though to some extent we soon made good our mechanical deficiency, yet it was a long and weary while—too long to please the soldiers—before we drew level with the scientific thoroughness of our opponents. In one respect, indeed, they could boast of an advantage which we need not envy them. They had little or no regard for the etiquette or chivalry of war ; and ugly tales were told of the misuse of the white flag, of traps which traded on our men's humanity, and of Germans who deliberately surrendered and then struck down their captors from behind. The climax came, however, when early in next spring the use of poison-gas was first exploited. Thanks to this new device the enemy came near to winning through on the north of the Ypres salient. They failed, however, to push home their first success ; and the sight of their tortured victims, livid from choking lungs, roused in our men such spirit as no failure or discouragement could quench. For now at least we came to realize, if we did not so before, with what manner of foe it was we had to deal.

II. RUSSIA, GALLIPOLI, AND OTHER EASTERN THEATRES

If in the West their hope of a swift decision had thus been falsified, the Germans' confidence in the safety of their eastern frontier was better founded. For, though the rapidity of Russia's early strokes upset their calculations, she was not able to maintain the pace ; and their low estimate of her capacity proved substantially correct. To the uninstructed British public, on the other hand, "the

Russian steam-roller" appeared a tower of strength; and they foolishly looked forward to seeing the Tsar's hosts advance slowly, but surely, on Berlin. It was a pure illusion. Russia's weakness had already been displayed ten years before in her war against Japan; and, although since then she had reorganized her army, its radical defects had not been changed. Her human resources, it is true, are almost limitless. Given time, she could well raise 10,000,000 men or more; and these, though inferior to the German in intelligence and training, were magnificent material, endowed with a courage unsurpassed by any people, half-fatalistic (for there is much of the Oriental in the Russian character), half-born of a childlike faith in their religion and their Tsar. But wars in the twentieth century are not fought with men alone; and in every type of mechanical equipment the Russian Army was far behind the times. There were not even rifles sufficient to go round; and often men were marched unarmed into a battle to await their turn with a rifle when some comrade should be killed. Their losses were appalling; for the German artillery mowed them down by thousands; and it was too seldom that their own could effectively reply. Munition factories of a sort they did indeed possess; but theirs is not by nature an industrial country; and the supply of guns and shells fell lamentably short. Worse still, the intrigues of traitors and the corruption of officials were a constant hindrance to the commanders at the front. These, luckily, were men of sterling character; and the Grand Duke Nicholas, their *generalissimo*, was no mean strategist. His first blow, struck at the earliest possible moment to relieve the heavy pressure upon France, was an invasion of East Prussia. This province, which protrudes between Poland and the Baltic, was particularly precious to the Germans for the corn supplies it furnished; and when into it burst Rennenkampf, the Cossack leader, driving before him the scared inhabitants and leaving behind him a trail of gutted villages and blazing stacks, there arose wild panic throughout Eastern Germany. The raid achieved its purpose in checking the flow of German

reinforcements to the critical battle-ground in France; but its success was brief. In the marshy neighbourhood of the Masurian Lakes part of the Russian Army was waylaid by



MAP OF THE RUSSIAN FRONT.

the veteran Hindenburg, who knew the district well and made a skilful use of its strategic railways. They were enveloped at Tannenberg and perished almost to a man.

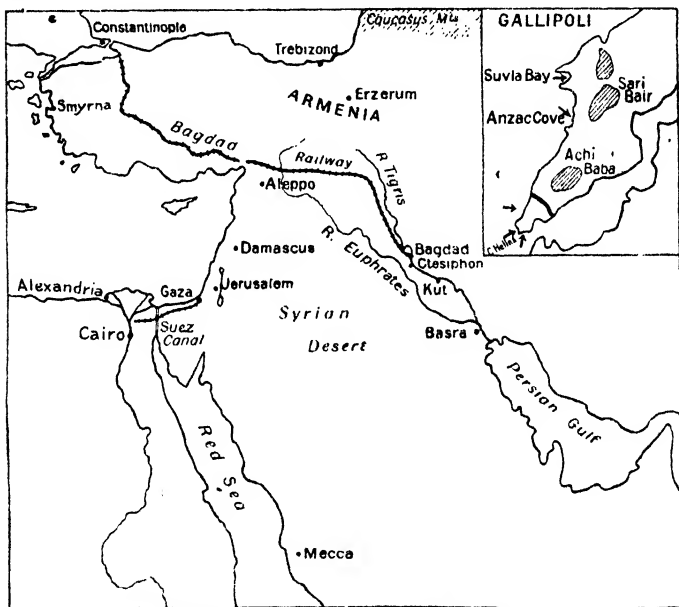
For the moment Eastern Germany was saved ; but this disaster notwithstanding the Grand Duke continued his offensive strategy. Using Warsaw, as his centre, he was soon pushing westwards in a far-flung sweep. By now, however, the enemy's resistance had begun to stiffen ; and, as the campaign approached the German border and the important district of the Silesian mine-fields, the Russians were first held and then thrown back. Meanwhile in the south better fortune had attended their invasion of the Austrian province of Galicia. The Austrian Army, drawn as it largely was from the Empire's disaffected subject peoples, and officered by a callous, inefficient aristocracy, showed no great stomach for resisting them. They overran Galicia, captured after a siege the great fortress of Przemyśl, and even topped the crest of the Carpathian mountains, beyond which lay the fertile granary of the Hungarian plains. Such a threat to the supplies of their confederate brought the Germans to her aid. They reorganized the Austrian Army, stiffened it with regiments of their own, and in the early summer of 1915 undertook a bold offensive in Galicia, not merely for the purpose of recovering that province, but in the hope of breaking Russia once for all. Secretly massing a huge park of field artillery and placing their own crack general von Mackensen in command, they sprang a great surprise. The deluge of their shells blotted out an entire sector of the front ; and, driving through the gap, they turned the whole Russian line to north of them. Every foot of ground was stubbornly contested ; but the German onslaught was not stayed. In August they entered Warsaw ; then for mile after bleak mile pushed forward across Poland, till by autumn the Russian frontier proper had been crossed. There is a limit, however, even to the most spectacular advances ; and, though to reach Petrograd or Moscow seemed not impossible, yet the memory of Napoleon's fate was a warning against so ambitious an excursion ; and eventually a halt was called on the line of Vilna-Rovno. The summer's campaign had been a marvellous triumph and the joy-bells were still ringing in Berlin.

But, though the Russian Army had been beaten in perhaps a score of battles and driven back more than two hundred miles, its front was still continuous; and there was fight left in it yet. Thus, after all, what the Germans had set out to do they had not done. 1915 was drawing to a close; and the *decision* which the war's first year denied them in the west, the second year had now denied them in the east as well.

To the Allies, however, this was a scanty comfort. The "steam-roller" had rolled, but, contrary to prediction, had rolled back; and it needed no great perspicacity to see the reason why. Lack of ammunition was the root cause of Russia's trouble—so much her friends had long since understood—but how to get it to her had been an awkward question, more difficult to solve. The Baltic was blocked by German battleships and minefields. Archangel on the northern coast was free from ice only in summer months. There remained the Dardanelles, and here most unhappily the Turks were across the way. Even before the war, as we have said, their sympathies had leant towards Germany; in the first days, and while still strictly neutrals, they had given shelter to her two men of war, the "Goeben" and the "Breslau," which had eluded our pursuit. The presence of these battleships had applied the needful spur to their irresolution; and they had taken the fateful plunge. If, therefore, the Allies were to unlock the Dardanelles and get at Russia, it would have to be against the resistance of the Turk. Nor was this by any means an easy proposition. The Straits are by nature strong; and under the supervision of German officers, lent for the purpose several years before, their defences had been brought well up to date. There were those, however, among our naval strategists who had been much impressed by the collapse of Belgian fortresses under the fire of modern guns; they believed that the broadsides of our more powerful battleships would have similar success; and, since no land forces were then available for a joint operation, they determined very early in 1915 to attempt to force the Straits with ships alone. The result was a

lamentable failure. The forts at the entrance were silenced, it is true, and the Franco-British fleet got some four miles up the channel; but the fire of the concealed batteries on either side the Narrows, and the danger of floating mines which drifted down the current, compelled them to fall back with the loss of three large ships. In one sense it was worse than a failure; it was an unpardonable blunder; for it gave the Turks a warning of our plans. The Gallipoli peninsula, hitherto untenanted by troops, was soon packed with Turkish forces, seamed with trenches, and stiff with wire entanglements from the mountain to the shore; and, when five weeks later Sir Ian Hamilton arrived at Lemnos with a fleet of transports and 120,000 men aboard, it was evident to all that the hazards of a landing had in the interval been multiplied tenfold. The enterprise which followed was among the most audacious and most tragic of all time. The Turks are magnificent defensive fighters; and that our men should ever have succeeded in setting foot upon Gallipoli remains a standing marvel. Many feint attacks were planned at various points to divert the Turks' attention; but at two points, in particular, we meant to seize the shore, and we succeeded. Australians and New Zealanders rushed a small bay or inlet on the south-west coast, which came to be known from their corps' initial letters as the "Anzac" Cove. British regiments, meanwhile, were conveyed in boats and barges to Cape Hellas at the tip of the peninsula. The Turks, who were perfectly prepared for their arrival, poured in a hail of shot. Despite of it, however, the boats were driven on the beaches, our men swarmed over, and the thing was done. Yet they lost, perhaps, half their number in the doing of it, and the survivors, crouching under the shelter of low cliffs, seemed doomed to death or capture. Nevertheless, they not merely held their footing, but advanced inland in the teeth of Turkish fire. By dint of costly rushes, aided by the curtain-fire of the battleships behind, they crept up the southern tip of the peninsula, until they had occupied a tongue of land over two miles in depth. But farther they could not go. The heights of

Achi Baba which were their true objective defied every effort to advance; and for weeks a hopeless, though heroic, struggle was maintained without result. The horror of our men's sufferings—the heat, the thirst, the stench, and, perhaps worst of all, the flies—is enough to stagger thought. Fever and dysentery played havoc in the ranks; and the sick or wounded could not be got away except under cover



GALLIPOLI, PALESTINE AND MESOPOTAMIA.

of the night. Yet the effort of our soldiers was never once relaxed; and in daring raids or skilful sniping the Turk soon found himself outmatched. In August the long awaited reinforcements at length arrived from England; and Sir Ian Hamilton essayed a second stroke. The fresh troops were put ashore at Anzac and somewhat higher up the western coast at Suvla Bay. Opposite the new landing stood a range of heights, and most conspicuous among them the

gaunt hill of Sari Bair. If this were captured, we should be able from its crest to dominate the fortresses which lined the Straits; and so completely did our landing take the enemy by surprise that at one moment its capture seemed accomplished. The forces engaged, however, were mostly untried troops, receiving here upon this wild and open coast their baptism of fire. Officers being killed, regiments lost their bearings. Clear orders were not issued or, if issued, went astray; and the success of the first stroke was scarcely grasped. The confusion on the beaches impeded the supplies, which were so sorely needed, from reaching the advance parties on the inland slopes; and, when the Turkish forces at length rallied and their counter-attack came, we were hurled back from off the heights we had so nearly won. To prolong the campaign after this second failure appeared without excuse; but it was not until after Christmas that the final evacuation was achieved.¹ Like the landing, it was a marvellous combination of efficiency and bluff; and the Turks were unaware that we even thought of going until the morning after we had gone.

The Gallipoli adventure, however unsuccessful, had at least this much of merit, that it kept the Turkish Army from troubling us elsewhere. Its abandonment, therefore, let loose large enemy forces which had been hitherto pinned down, and caused us equally to dissipate our efforts among many minor theatres of the East. One urgent call upon our sadly strained resources came from Serbia in the autumn of 1915. Hitherto our gallant Ally had held her own with astonishing success; and on two separate occasions she had bloodily repulsed an Austrian invasion from the north. Now, however, upon her Eastern frontier also she was faced with the attack of a new foe. Since the defeat which he had suffered at her hands in 1913 Ferdinand of Bulgaria had been awaiting his revenge. With the Germans he already had a secret understanding; and, so soon as our failure at

¹ Suvla Bay and Anzac Cove were evacuated on 20 December; the tip of the Peninsula on 9 January.

Gallipoli seemed proven and he felt there was no danger of an attack upon his rear, he came out upon their side. Thus assailed upon two fronts, Serbia's case was hopeless. First Belgrade, then Nish had in turn to be abandoned, and the diminished army, unable to make much fight of it, retired south-west into the mountains and, after a terrible march among the snow-clad passes, succeeded in reaching the Adriatic coast. The Allies, as so often, were too late to avert the tragedy; and the best that we could do—though hesitating



THE ITALIAN AND BALKAN FRONTS.

long before we did it—was to prevent the important town of Salonica from falling also into Austrian hands. This port, from which enemy submarines could have swept the whole Ægean, belonged in reality to Greece. Hence arose a delicate and awkward situation. For Constantine, the King of Greece, had strong pro-German leanings; and he refused downright to give us leave to land. By a recent treaty, however, Greece was pledged to render help to Serbia, if Serbia were attacked; on the score of this we determined to ignore the protest of the King; and in October a mixed

force of French and British went ashore. Its belated effort to assist the retreating Serbs bore no fruit; and the only genuine service which it continued to perform was to occupy the attention of the Bulgar Army and to keep a watch on the ambiguous attitude of Greece. The lines round Salonica were strengthened and enlarged; and, when the greater part of our Gallipoli divisions had been transported thither at the ending of the year, they began to form the nucleus of a formidable army, fit one day to square the reckoning with the foe.

Meantime, as we have said, if the evacuation of Gallipoli set our own forces free, so equally did it set free large forces of the Turk. This was a serious matter; and to the holders of Egypt and the Canal at Suez—never perhaps more valuable than now—the prospect was a black one. Already in February of 1915 the Turks had made a bid at seizing the canal; and, though easily repulsed, they held the whole of the Sinai peninsula, a most disconcerting menace to ourselves. Luckily, however, the Arabs were against them; and, even if such allies were a weak reed for us to lean on, we decided that an offensive was the best method of defence. Accordingly, in the first months of 1916 we began to push our forces across the trackless desert which divides the Suez isthmus from southern Palestine. A railway was constructed to facilitate supplies. The enemy's attacks were beaten off. The Shereef of Mecca revolted from the Turks; and all for a time went well. But the pace of our advance was inevitably slow; and, the threat to Palestine being somewhat in the air, the Turks had meanwhile felt free to concentrate their forces on more telling work elsewhere. At the head of the Persian Gulf we possessed before the war an important oil supply which served our fleet. To secure its safety we had lost no time in landing a small force—mainly of Indian regiments—at Basra. Once there the temptation of striking at the Turk had been too strong to be resisted; and General Townshend had marched up the Tigris, defeated a Turkish army in the neighbourhood of Kut, and pressed north

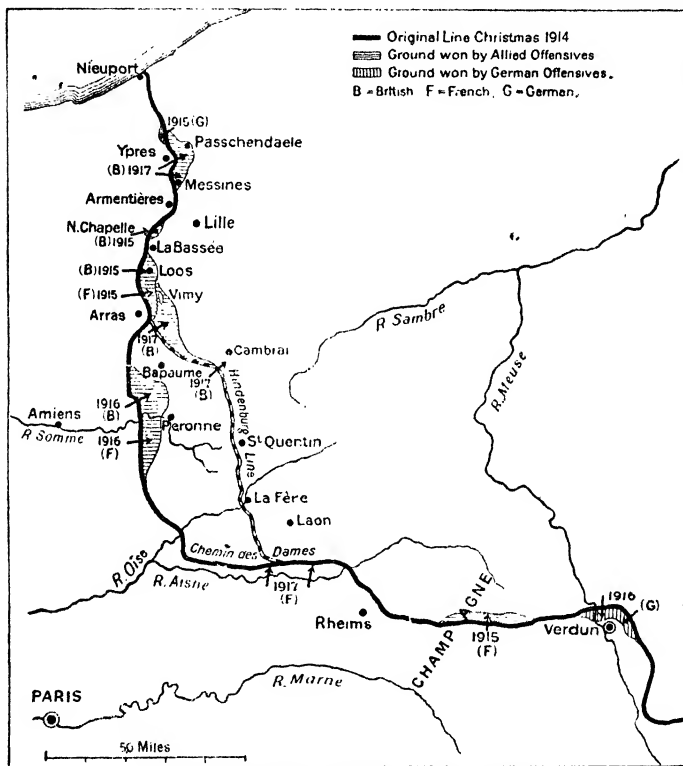
towards Bagdad. By the middle of November, 1915, he had reached a point within five-and-twenty miles of the historic town itself. Its capture, which would greatly have enhanced our prestige throughout the East, seemed hourly imminent; yet already, though as yet we scarcely knew it, we were too late. Part of the Turkish forces, which our failure at Gallipoli had freed, were being hurried east. The railway line, which before the war had been constructed by the Germans to Bagdad, facilitated their arrival; and, though Townshend beat their vanguard in fine style at Ctesiphon, he was compelled the moment after to fall back once more on Kut. Thither he was followed; and for five dreary winter months he was held under close siege. Forces sent up for his relief could make no headway. The Tigris' floods were out; and the Turks now had men in plenty to resist us. At the end of April, after terrible privations heroically borne, the garrison of Kut gave in. Still worse might well have followed but for a timely Russian exploit in an unexpected quarter. The Grand Duke Nicholas, deprived of his high position during the great retreat, had been sent to command the army of the Caucasus; and there he had straightway planned a daring invasion of the Turks' Armenian border. While Kut was still untaken, he had descended through deep snow upon the powerful fortress-town of Erzerum, captured it, and, before the Turks could rally, driven them back along the Black Sea coast as far as Trebizond. This threat to Asia Minor relieved to some extent the pressure on our forces in the south; and it showed that, notwithstanding their success in other theatres, the Turks were already feeling the heavy strain of war. They had no choice, indeed, but to fight on; for their German masters would not let them stop. But for them too, though still as yet far distant, the day of reckoning was to come at last.

III. HOPES DEFERRED, 1915-16

Throughout the war there were those (even in high places) who held that to strike at our weakest enemy was

the wisest strategy, and that our best hope of victory lay therefore in the East. Others held—and, as the issue proved, correctly—that to win the war we must first beat Germany, and that the road to victory lay therefore in the West. The controversy was to be decided only by events themselves; but among our high command this latter view upon the whole prevailed; and in the spring of 1915, despite the apparent deadlock on the Western front, they had some ground for confidence. To wear down the enemy's resistance would no doubt take time; but, if a war of sheer exhaustion was what lay ahead, then the balance of manpower seemed to favour the Allies. Russia, as has been said, was good for countless millions. France would continue the fight^o to her last man; and we now had good promise also of a new Ally. Italy showed signs of joining us. Notwithstanding her old alliance with the enemy, she was at heart in sympathy with our democratic cause; all she asked was the assurance that a large share of the Adriatic seaboard should be hers; the Allies' pledge once given on this point, she decided to come in, and in May, 1915, her armies, already mobilized, were launched against the Austrian frontier, with the twofold purpose of capturing Trieste and of regaining the long-coveted possession of "Italia Irredenta." Thus pressed, it was clear that Austria could spare no reinforcements for the German line in France; and, if Germany herself still had men to hold the trenches, we felt sure that, French and British put together, we had more. Our own reserves—the reserves of a world-empire—were slow no doubt in coming into play; but they were large. The Colonies were arming, ready and eager to take a part in England's war. Native troops had been trans-shipped from India, and were proud to fill the gaps in the hard-pressed line in France. Last, but not least, there were large new armies forming upon British soil itself. Lord Kitchener, when appointed at the outbreak of hostilities to be Secretary for War, had appealed for volunteers; and he had soon got more than the figure which he named. Hundreds of thousands, the pick of the nation's manhood,

were under training in improvised camp quarters. After nine or ten months' exercise the raw recruits of the preceding autumn would be fit to take the field. With these welcome reinforcements we should be able during summer to take over a fresh strip of the French line. Meanwhile



THE WESTERN FRONT, 1914-1917.

with spring the horrors of winter were forgotten; and hopes very naturally ran high.

The campaign on the Western front in 1915 was a one-sided affair. The Germans expended all their energy on the great Russian drive; and, except for the gas attack in

the neighbourhood of Ypres, they were content simply to hold their own. The initiative lay therefore with the Allies; and Sir John French led off in early March with an attack at Neuve Chapelle. We obliterated the enemy's defences with a lavish expenditure of shells, and entering the gap thus torn we made a mile of ground; then, while we were doubting how to follow up the stroke, the counter-attack came and we were firmly held. In May the French to south of us were hammering hard towards Lens; but, though they too won some country, they equally were held. After these disappointments a breathing-space was taken to prepare for an offensive on a more elaborate scale; and on 25 September two great attacks were simultaneously begun, one by the French alone in the rolling Champagne country east of Rheims, the other by French and British armies in conjunction on the old battle-ground of May. The results, though more extensive as measured by mere miles, fell far below our hopes. For, dent it as we might, the German front held firm; and we were as far as ever from achieving a genuine "break-through." Even if such a thing were possible at all, the problems to be solved seemed overwhelming; and how many were the pitfalls few had realized till now. Thus Loos, which was the primary objective of our own attack, we had carried at one rush; then, just when reserves were needed to hurl into the breach, it was found that in our desire to conceal them from the enemy we had kept them too far off to be of use. This strategical miscarriage was much criticized at home; and a few months later Sir John French was himself recalled, Sir Douglas Haig being promoted in his place. But it was not faults of generalship alone which were revealed by this year's failure. After Neuve Chapelle we had come suddenly to realize that our supply of high explosive was utterly inadequate. A vigorous Press campaign set the blame upon the War Office; and the Government was urged to step in and set things right. As a result, a new "Ministry of Munitions" was established. Lloyd George, who from Socialist reformer had now become

the chief protagonist of ruthless war, was appointed its first head; and soon shell factories were rising, as by magic, in every nook and corner of the land. England, in short, became a monster arsenal; yet she did not for all that intend to be regarded as a mere purveyor of supplies. More men were clearly needed on the Western front, before victory could be won; and to provide them was a duty which could not be burked. Conscription then appeared the obvious course; and, though Mr. Asquith's Cabinet had been hitherto averse to a method so opposed to the Liberal principles of individual freedom, yet without conscription it was difficult to see how more men were to be raised. Mr. Asquith's Cabinet, however, was now, in point of fact, no longer purely Liberal. During the crisis which arose about the lack of ammunition he had called on the Conservatives to join its ranks; the Coalition Ministry thus formed was in a strong position; and, when a few months later the necessity for conscription became so clear, it was able to appeal without prejudice of party to the loyal common-sense of Englishmen. Few voices in fact were raised in opposition when in the course of the winter of 1915-16 compulsory service for all under forty-two was made law by Act of Parliament. For now at any rate the task which lay ahead of us was beginning to be seen in true perspective; and the nation set its teeth.

So, despite the discouragements of Kut and Serbia, the failure of Russia and of the Dardanelles campaign, we embarked upon the year 1916 in a new spirit of grim resolve. All our resources "to the last man and the last shilling" were now to be thrown in; and the winter months were devoted to a preparation more elaborate, more scientific, and more soundly planned than heretofore. Lord Kitchener, its director, was unhappily lost to us in June, the ship which was to carry him to Russia having foundered on a mine; but Sir William Robertson took up the reins and showed clearly from the start that the Army's organization lay in not less able hands.¹ Before this occurred, however,

¹ Sir W. Robertson was not, like Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, but Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

the year's campaign had opened ; and this time the initiative was not with the Allies. The first blow came from the enemy. While February snows were still upon the ground, they launched an offensive of unprecedented force against Verdun. To achieve a real "break through" at so defensible a point was probably beyond their calculation ; but by capturing this angle of the French defence they hoped at least to daunt the nation's spirit, and even perhaps, when peace settlements were made, to secure it as a permanent possession. However that may be, they were determined to win Verdun. Their preliminary bombardment was on a gigantic scale ; and several of the forts which ringed the town were captured by assault. But the French under General Pétain rallied in good time ; and, as corps after corps of their assailants swarmed up the battered slopes, they flung them strongly back. So it went on, till there was scarcely a regiment in either army but was brought up in its turn to be thrown into the furnace ; and all through the critical weeks of April, May, and June the fortunes of battle swayed. It was a question now whether the British Army could strike its blow in time to relieve the pressure on the French and save Verdun. It could. On 1 July we launched our grand offensive on the River Somme. For months we had planned and studied the details of its strategy. Nothing now was left to chance. Emplacements had been built for a whole host of powerful guns. These were first to concentrate on the enemy's defences and pound them into dust. Then, as the infantry went forward to occupy the débris, the guns' elevation lifted and a curtain fire preceded the advance. An accurate time-table had been prepared, and every unit knew precisely at what minute to leave cover and at what point to stop. Aeroplanes, fitted with wireless installations, were to give headquarters tidings of the progress at the front. Most wonderful of all in this battle of many wonders, huge, armoured monsters, known for secrecy as "tanks,"¹ crept

¹ Tanks, in point of fact, were first used upon the Somme on 15 September.

ponderously forward over ditch and hedge and hillock, nosing out the machine-guns which our artillery had spared and enfilading nests of enemy sharpshooters. No battle in history had ever been conducted on so magnificent a scale; and first and last millions of men took part in it. Our attack was delivered on an enormous front measuring, with that of the adjacent French offensive, full five and twenty miles. Our main objective was Bapaume, an important centre of communications in the rear of the enemy's line; but on this occasion there was to be no mad rush to carry all at a blow. Three separate lines of German trenches lay between us and our goal; and each of these was methodically mastered along the entire front, before an advance was made against the next. At each successive stage, however, a pause for preparation was essential to success. The guns had to be brought up, emplacements built anew: and during the interval—two weeks or more in length—the Germans were free to bring up reinforcements and make fresh dispositions for defence. The result was that, by the time we had pushed up the rolling downland and looked over the crest on to the plains around Bapaume, autumn had overtaken us. November rains still found us on the descending slopes. We had won many miles of country. Our troops had fought with a heroism beyond description and beyond praise. Yet who shall say that we had won the battle? For to fail of victory at such a stage was little better than defeat; and, if after the close of it our disillusionment was bitter, there was a worse in store. Some fifteen miles away behind Bapaume, and cutting across the threatened angle of their front, the Germans had been busy for months past constructing a new line—the “Hindenburg line” as our soldiers christened it—and to this at the end of winter they suddenly withdrew, leaving behind them a broad tract of country which, as they went, they laid waste with a deliberate cunning to hamper and retard our men's pursuit. Such a retirement appeared perhaps at first to be to our advantage; but in reality it was the enemy who scored. It enabled him by the shorten-

ing of his line to economize his men ; while it imposed on ours the arduous necessity of constructing in a wilderness new trenches, new depots of supply, and new communications with the rear. It was a cruel consummation to our early hopes ; for nothing in warfare is more disconcerting than the sense of being tricked.

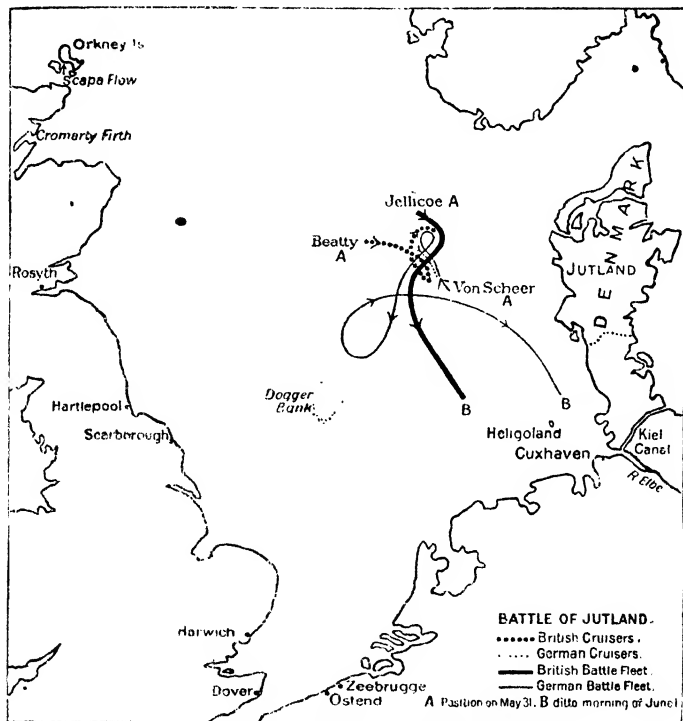
Truth to tell, we were beginning reluctantly to recognize that, in strategy at least, the German was our master. To aim the various fronts in east or west were but part of one vast battle-ground ; and, while on the Allied side the operation of each separate army was confined to its own sphere, *his* troops were hurried to the point where they were needed, from France to Serbia or from Galicia to the Somme, with the masterly precision of a single directing mind. In other words, unity of command and the geographical advantage of interior lines enabled his troops, despite their dwindling numbers, still to do double work ; and thanks to this they were to achieve in the autumn of 1916 a success which counterbalanced any losses of the year. . . . That sooner or later the friendly State, Rumania, would range herself upon the Allied side had long been the hope and expectation of our diplomats. She was an old enemy of Austria ; and, like Italy, she longed to redeem her fellow-countrymen of Transylvania from the Empire's alien yoke. For a while she had very naturally been daunted by the sad collapse of Russia ; but in the course of this year's summer the situation on the Eastern front had taken a better turn. Brussiloff, the dashing Russian general, had struck strongly in the south, making great havoc of Austria's demoralized divisions and taking an enormous haul of willing prisoners. Rumania felt encouraged ; and at the end of August she also took the plunge. Great was the satisfaction among Allied nations ; but their satisfaction was destined to be brief. Shortly before, as it so happened, there had been drastic changes in the German High Command. Falkenhayn, discredited by the failure of his offensive at Verdun, was superseded by von Hindenburg, the new national favourite and the successful commander of the Eastern

front ; more important still, his Chief of Staff and the real directing brain of future operations was a man of very great, if not of supreme genius—Ludendorff. Now to these two new commanders the entry of Rumania came as a golden opportunity of displaying German strength. Though the Somme battle was still raging, several enemy divisions were spared from the French front ; and these assailed our new Ally on her western flank. Simultaneously, Bulgaria threatened her from the south ; and, since the promised aid from Russia never came, her doom was quickly sealed. Bucharest, her capital, was in German hands by Christmas ; and the battered remnant of the Rumanian Army was driven back and back, until nothing more remained to them than a narrow strip of country along the Russian border in the east. To the Allies this rapid downfall of their latest friend was a terrible setback. Nothing could have been more damaging to their prestige ; and a growing belief in the invincibility of German arms began to take a hold on doubting hearts. Happily, however, those that hoped were more than those that doubted. A German offer of peace was repelled with scornful pride ; and, dark as the hour was, the British spirit hardened to the trial. It was a symptom not of despair, but of increasing resolution, that in December public opinion approved the overthrow of Mr. Asquith on the ground that he lacked energy, and hailed with genuine relief the promotion of Lloyd George as one who would fight to the death.

IV. WAR ON THE SEAS

At the end, then, of the war's third autumn the outlook was not promising ; but pessimists were apt, as is their habit, to look too much upon the surface. Underlying the chequered fortune of the long-drawn struggle there was still one sure foundation for good hope ; and, looking deeper, we should have known (what our wars with France had taught us long ago) that, when sea power and land power are confronted, sea power wins. It cannot be too

often or too emphatically remembered how essential a foundation not merely of our victory, but of our very existence as a nation and an empire, was the supremacy of our Navy and its command of the world's seas. From the declaration of war in August, 1914, until the signing of the



NAVAL WARFARE IN THE NORTH SEA.

Armistice just over four years later, this never for one hour or for one minute ceased to be true; and that during all those years, under circumstances far more difficult and trying than ever Hawke or Nelson knew, our admirals and sailors maintained and more than maintained the high tradition of the past—is a matter to thank God on. Their

activities were manifold and ubiquitous ; for, though France and Italy both helped to share it, the work was mainly ours. Broadly speaking, it fell under two heads. First, we had to defeat or at any rate to immobilize the enemy's North Sea Fleet, thereby securing our own coasts against invasion and gaining incidentally a stranglehold over all the German ports. We had, secondly, to safeguard, in whatever sea or ocean, the Allied shipping both which carried and supplied our troops and which (equally important) fed the civil populations that would otherwise have starved. So successfully, so silently, and withal so unobtrusively was this twofold task performed that at times it is difficult to remember the magnitude of the burden it imposed.

The building up of the German Navy, as we have seen above, had been extraordinarily rapid, and, up to a point, extraordinarily efficient ; so that in August, 1914, it was no contemptible rival to our own. The margin of our superiority was then, in fact, so narrow that the performance of all our many naval duties was the severest tax upon the Fleet's resources. In the first few months, if ever, the invasion of the east coast would have been a possibility ; but it was never tried ; and little by little the ceaseless activity of our shipyards began to give us so decisive a superiority of numbers that we could count on dealing faithfully with any such attempt. Meantime, however, our coasts had not altogether escaped from hostile visitation. Impudent and vexatious, but for the most part harmless, raids, were made by fast enemy cruisers, which ran across under cover of night or mist, fired a few shells on Yarmouth, Hartlepool, and Scarborough, and then fled back to Kiel with all possible dispatch. In January, 1915, they tried to play this trick one time too often ; Admiral Beatty's cruiser squadron got wind of their design, cut in upon the raiders as they ran for home, and sank one battleship, the "Blücher," while severely damaging the rest. This engagement, fought off the Dogger Bank, was a warning to the enemy to discontinue such adventures ; and, indeed, thanks to the

increase of our armaments, our defensive dispositions were growing more and more complete. Torpedo-boat flotillas were in readiness at Harwich and at Dover. Beatty's battle cruisers lay for the most part at Rosyth in the Firth of Forth; and at Scapa Flow in the Orkneys was stationed the main Battle Fleet of dreadnoughts and super-dreadnoughts under Admiral Jellicoe. Each of these squadrons was prepared at an instant's notice to descend on any German who appeared in the North Sea. The incessant labours of intrepid mine-sweepers kept the channels always clear. If enemy ships were sighted patrols, fitted with wireless, would flash back the summons to the larger craft; and it became, in fact, impossible for any vessel to emerge from German ports unobserved or with impunity.

But, if the Kaiser's fleet was thus effectually "bottled up" in Cuxhaven or Kiel, it was no desire of ours that it should remain so. On the contrary, we were eager to give battle whenever the enemy were willing; and more than once we ran considerable risks in trying to induce him to come out. In the first August, for example, and again on Christmas Eve, our destroyers and light cruisers actually ventured inside Heligoland Bight in the attempt to draw him; but as soon as ever the pursuit became aware of our big vessels in the offing it sheered off and made for home. The fact is, the Germans knew only too well that a fleet in being was of greater value than a fleet at the bottom of the sea; and they were not for taking hazards. Nevertheless they paid a heavy price for their inaction; for our command of the seas enabled us to cut off all their trade. Slow as we were (out of deference to neutrals) in making use of this advantage, we were driven at last by the necessities of war to use it to the full. In 1915 we began to exercise freely the right of search at sea. In the summer of next year we took a big step forward and declared as contraband, not food alone, but all materials, such as rubber and raw cotton, which might assist the enemy in making war. Difficulties arose, of course, with neutrals like the Dutch, who could import forbidden articles and then sell

them to the Germans. But we kept a sharp look out for such-like practices; and by rationing the neutrals for their own consumption we eventually frustrated any leakage of this kind. The sowing of a mine field across the upper end of the North Sea enabled us to intercept all ships that sailed for Europe; and before the war was over the blockade we had so tardily begun came to exercise a painful pressure on the German Army and the German people. Such pressure, one would think, might well have driven the German Navy to take courage and try conclusions with our own. Yet for that it lacked audacity; and the sole occasion on which the two fleets met was not sought by them at least. What game it was precisely which caused them to come out is of little consequence. "Very probably they hoped to catch at unawares some isolated portion of our scattered forces. But however that may be, the fact remains that about half-past two on the afternoon of 31 May, 1916, while occupied (as often) in cruising the North Sea, our Battle Fleet got wind through the messages of scouts of the German Fleet's approach. Their cruisers were first sighted opposite the Jutland coast (which gave its name to the battle); and Beatty's cruisers were at once dispatched to intercept their escape south. Failing of that, and coming into contact with the enemy's main Fleet, he turned his squadron north again with intent to draw them after him towards Jellicoe's big ships. This manœuvre exposed him to the concentrated fire of the full German gun-power; and though he gave almost as much damage as he got, two of his ships were sunk. But the manœuvre so far succeeded that the Germans followed, and soon after six o'clock the two main fleets engaged. Jellicoe swerved eastwards towards the Jutland coast, and was just working down between the Germans and their base when the light began to fail. This placed him in a difficult dilemma. To close in would have been perilous for our ponderous super-dreadnoughts; and even as it was, torpedo boat attacks came near to taking toll of them. So, rightly or wrongly, Jellicoe thought wise to keep his distance; and under the

gathering mists of twilight von Scheer, the German admiral, made good his escape south-westward; and though our destroyer's followed close behind him, vanished into the night. . . . Till morning Jellicoe kept cruising outside the German base waiting for him to come; but von Scheer never came. He had made a ring round north again and, eluding observation, had crept into port by an unguarded channel. So the great victory we hoped for, and except for fickle weather might have had, was not vouchsafed to us. For all that we had done well; for despite our grievous losses, which were as large or even larger than the Germans', we had decided once and for all the command of the North Sea. The Germans had fought well and their initial salvoes were more accurate than ours. But their gunners were soon rattled, unable when the test came to stand our hammering; and from first to last their strategy had been the strategy of flight. Morale, when all is said, is of more account than mere mechanical efficiency; and the confinement to harbour which the Germans had accepted was no preparation for a stand-up fight. They might claim Jutland as a victory and welcome; but they knew it in their hearts for a defeat; and never again did they venture to leave harbour until they left it to surrender—vanquished yet without a fight. Some ground for confidence we therefore had in the autumn of 1916. Henceforward the supreme risk could be discounted, seeing that our Navy had made good; yet in the approaching winter there was another risk to follow—a risk more subtle and, if anything, more perilous; for this time the attack was aimed no longer at our battle fleet, but at our defenceless mercantile marine.

When first the war broke out, the enemy, expecting it, had commerce-raiders ready in every quarter of the globe. Of these the greater part were captured with little or no trouble; but a few remained for some while at large, avoiding detection by ingenious *ruses de guerre* and inflicting terrible havoc on our shipping. All were at length tracked down; and even the elusive and adventurous "Emden" could not escape her fate. In the Pacific, however, there was a

cruiser squadron not to be disposed of till it had dealt us a painful blow. Its Admiral, von Spee, caught our own much weaker squadron under Cradock off the western coast of Chile; and Cradock, manfully refusing the alternative of flight, was sunk with all his ships but one small cruiser. The disaster awoke our Admiralty to instant action. Unknown to the Germans and to Englishmen alike, they sent out Admiral Sturdee with a force sufficient to make short work of von Spee. Guessing the enemy's intention, he made for the Falkland Islands; and sure enough, within twenty-four hours of his arrival the German squadron came steaming towards the port. The issue of the engagement which ensued was a foregone conclusion; the Germans were hopelessly out-gunned; and though they fought pluckily enough, Sturdee's bombardment swiftly sent them to the bottom. Thus the high seas were safe once more to allied shipping; the blockade of our Grand Fleet was not easily eluded; occasional raiders which broke out from the North Sea were for the most part soon detected; and there was little left to fear upon this score, had it not been for the unexpected and illegal use which was made of submarines. Now the code of naval warfare lays it down that a prize taken at sea must not be scuttled, but be towed into a port or at the very least arrangements made for the safety of its crew. As the submarine, however, could not easily comply with either of these conditions the Germans soon made up their minds to disregard them. At first their depredations were not particularly serious. But gradually their submarines increased in size and number; the range of their operations lengthened out, so that one succeeded in crossing the Atlantic and visiting the States; more disastrous still, fresh bases were organized in distant seas from which submarines could issue or take in supplies; and in 1915 the Mediterranean became the pirates' favourite hunting-ground. Over a thousand vessels were there sunk within the year; and if the outlook seemed alarming, there was worse to come. Hitherto the Germans had never quite made up their minds how far it was wise to carry their illegal practices. Some-

times indeed, as in the notorious instance of the "Lusitania," they had shown no regard whatever for the lives of those aboard. But more often they had given fair warning to their victims, allowing time, before they sank a vessel, for the crew's re-embarkation in the boats. When our merchantmen, however, took to mounting guns on deck and retaliated hotly on the submarines, such tactics ceased to pay; and the enemy grew reckless. Early in 1916, they horrified the world by announcing that in future no warning would be given, but that every vessel would be sunk at sight. The protests of America obtained us a short respite; and in point of fact the German preparations were not as yet complete. But though for that year at least they stayed their hand, the prospect was sufficiently alarming; and Jellicoe was in autumn brought back from the main fleet to supervise the improvement of our counter measures. Before many months were out, all our skill was sorely needed; for in the spring of 1917, and this time in deadly earnest, the great submarine offensive was begun. "Unrestricted Warfare" was declared on all ships that sailed the sea. Without warning, without regard for rights of neutrals or the dictates of humanity, they were to be "sunk without a trace." The crisis was appalling. During that spring one quarter of the vessels which put out from English ports were never seen again. Within a year 6,000,000 tons of our shipping had been lost outright. Food supplies ran perilously short; and despite a stringent rationing we came nearer to starvation than we have ever done before. There were two things alone which saved us: first, the heroism of our merchant sailors, who for all the risks they ran never once refused a voyage; and second, the ingenuity and the invincible resolve of our naval officers and men. There was no end to their activities. Destroyers were told off to convoy vessels through the danger zone, and woe betide the submarine which dared to show its nose. Other craft of various types undertook the dangerous duty of hunting down the pest. Instruments were invented whereby the sound of a submarine's propeller could be detected from afar; balloons

and aeroplanes hovered above the surface to spy out its whereabouts; and swift launches were in readiness to drop a depth-charge of explosives on the spot where it lay. All manner of clever ruses were adopted. "Mystery ships," disguised as harmless tramps, unmasked their hidden batteries on U-boats which had thought them easy prey. But all these various methods notwithstanding, it was long before the situation was got well in hand. The Channel and its approaches were naturally the main field of the enemy's campaign; and their possession of the adjacent Flanders coastline gave them the great advantage of a convenient base. Zeebrugge and Ostend were the two favourite ports of call; and our men's determination to put these two ports out of action led to what was perhaps the finest exploit of the war. The harbour of Zeebrugge, it should be explained, is half enclosed by a great pier or mole, which projected far out to sea; and shortly after midnight on 23 April, 1918, two British steamers were run in and laid beside it.¹ The crews then clambered out over the parapet and engaged in a wild struggle with the German batteries which swept the surface of the mole at point-blank range. At the same time a submarine, fully loaded with explosives, was driven under the bridge which joined the mole to the mainland; and sending it sky-high, cut off the passage for all German reinforcements from the shore. But all this was a mere feint. Under cover of a smoke-screen three other of our vessels were stealthily piloted inside the harbour, driven straight for the canal which had served the German submarines for exit, and there deliberately sunk across the fairway. The crews took to their boats and were all picked up outside. The other ships sheered off and left the mole; and the whole flotilla put back to Dover harbour without the loss of a single ship. A few nights later a similar manoeuvre was repeated at Ostend; and such was the success of this amazing enterprise that the Germans had not cleared out either

¹ The chief credit of this particular exploit belongs to Captain Carpenter's ship the "Vindictive"; but the whole operation was under the command of Sir Roger Keyes.

channel when the war itself came to a close. Though their submarines still continued to prey upon our shipping, they were no longer able to find shelter in Flemish ports ; and so great was the destruction that we wrought among them that it became no easy matter for the Germans to find men prepared to face the terrors of a cruise. Thus, once again the British Navy had triumphed over perils perhaps the greatest it was ever called to meet ; and it remained until the end what at the beginning the King called it, the "sure shield" both of our own and of our Allies' cause.

V. RUSSIA, AMERICA, AND THE CAMPAIGNS OF 1917

So, after all, there was a silver lining to the clouds which gathered round us in the early months of 1917 ; and if it was true we had our troubles, the Germans too had theirs. For had the truth been known, the strain of war was more severely felt beyond the Rhine than here in England. The blockade was making itself felt. Food rations were short ; and Germany was hungry. Imperceptibly too her energies were beginning to be sapped. For two and a half years now she had been working at highest pressure, intent to put every ounce of human energy into the manufacture of munitions and every man or boy fit to march or bear a musket into the field. Such things cannot continue ; and now Germany herself was like some great machine which to the outward eye still works as well as ever, but within are heard those ominous creaks and premonitory groanings which are the prelude of ultimate collapse. Though she would not admit it even to herself, her case was well-nigh desperate ; and a sure measure of her desperation was the resolve which she took, as we have seen above, to declare war upon the shipping (and at the same time on the conscience) of the world. It was a fatal and unnecessary step ; for had she known it, an event was now at hand which was to transform in a breath the whole military position and was to bring her much more nearly than we care to think within touch of victory.

In a backward country such as Russia, the government is bound to be despotic. The Tsar himself might have the best intentions; but a policy of repression was sure to be forced on him at times; and truth to tell, the recent acts of Nicholas' Ministers had been peculiarly and needlessly repressive. Nor, on the other hand, was it a new thing in Russia to find widespread discontent; agitators were invariably at work among the people; and the miseries which followed in the train of war had but increased their chance. In the March of 1917 a shortage of food in the great cities provoked a sudden crisis. A spontaneous rising took place in Petrograd. The Army went over to the people's cause; and within a week the most powerful monarchy which then existed in the world, had crumbled and was gone. The Tsar with his own hand signed a deed of abdication; and his place was taken by the Parliament or Duma, a constitutional experiment extorted from him but a few years previously, but an assembly most unhappily which lacked as yet either experience or authority. The truth was that the Duma represented the bourgeoisie or middle-classes alone, no more than a tiny fraction of the whole community; and its leaders, though shouldering the task of government with courage, soon found the situation far beyond their own control. For side by side with the usurpation of the Duma, there had been another movement more truly popular, more revolutionary in aim, and yet in a sense more highly organized. If the peasants of the country-side were slow at first to grasp their opportunity, not so the industrial workers of the towns. Already there were among them leaders of violent, Socialistic views who believed in the gospel of Karl Marx and in the necessity of destroying the capitalist class. Such men had their plans ready; and on the outbreak of revolution working folk throughout the country had formed Councils or "Soviets" which claimed for themselves the right of electing and controlling the future government. Thus Russia found herself torn between the rival factions. For a while the issue of the struggle seemed uncertain; but as the months passed, the extremist party triumphed and

the moderates went to the wall. In May the old Duma leaders were ousted by Kerensky, who, though more advanced than they, was at least as honestly determined to keep things together. In November he in turn was overthrown by the out-and-out reformers; and Lenin and Trotsky, calling themselves "Bolsheviks" or (as we should say) "whole-hoggers," took up the reins of power. Their gospel, based on Marx, was thorough-going; it aimed at nothing short of the elimination of the capitalist class (which they effected by massacre or slow starvation) and the complete supremacy of the workers' representatives (whom long after the workers had ceased to acquiesce in it, they persisted in asserting to be no one but themselves). They won at the outset an easy popularity by establishing the peasants in the possession of the land; and the ruffianly assassins whom they bribed by food or money to support them secured their authority by force of arms. A reign of terror, which it was death to disobey, became the settled polity of Russia. Meanwhile among the first effects of the Revolution had been the disintegration of the Army. "Soviets" were established even at the front; and the soldiers claimed the right to elect their officers. The death penalty for cowardice or desertion was abolished; and regiments began to melt away. Though the Duma leaders who first took on the government, had remained loyal to the Allies; and though even Kerensky had ordered an offensive which at one time promised well, yet the spirit was gone out of the Russian soldier and a discipline once weakened could never be restored. The collapse was final when in autumn Lenin entered on the scene and began the civil conflict with his fellow-countrymen by arranging for peace parleys with his country's foe. The terms, which were largely dictated by the Germans, were not finally concluded until March, 1918; but almost from the outset of the Revolution the end was not in doubt. As a military factor, Russia might henceforward be discounted; and the whole weight of German manpower could be employed against the West. To the Allies this seemed equivalent to a sentence

of defeat, or at best to an indefinite postponement of their hopes of victory. Yet fate was merciful; and German fatuity itself supplied the counterblast to this unkindly blow.

Hitherto throughout the war the attitude of the United States had been one of strict and even cold neutrality. Though, of course, there was an element among their citizens who were sympathetic to the Allied cause, there were as many more perhaps who owning no tie of British origin or unwilling to forget old grudges of past history, refused to recognize their obligation to take part in Europe's battle, and who saw nothing in the war but a golden opportunity to make a mint of money out of both belligerents. President Wilson, as in duty bound to reflect his countrymen's opinions, strove to steer a middle course. He censured the sinking of the "Lusitania," but he also objected strongly to the hampering restrictions imposed on neutral commerce by our own blockade. In other words, he upheld the rights and interests of America no less against ourselves than against our foe; and he was not prepared to embark upon hostilities for any other purpose than the defence of those same rights. As time went on, however, his protests against German inhumanity became more vehement. When American passengers were drowned at sea through the act of submarines, he issued sterner warnings; but words without acts made little impression on the German mind; and they soothed themselves with the comfortable fancy that the President's bark was more serious than his bite. There they were wrong; and when their "unrestricted warfare" against shipping was declared in the spring of 1917, they discovered their mistake. The United States were on their mettle; they had said that they would fight and now they meant to show that they could do it. Utterly unprepared as they were for making war, they proposed to swell their tiny army into millions; and they set about the task with a stupendous energy. To the Allies, put in jeopardy by the paralysis of Russia, the Americans' adhesion came like tidings of reprieve. They knew now that if they themselves could hold the ramparts long enough, victory was sure.

Nevertheless, it was an uphill fight which we still had to face. During the campaigning season of 1917 we had still a superiority of numbers on the Western front; and while that was so, we could not else but strike. Offensives were planned on at least as large a scale as in the previous year; and their failure, which was certainly as great, was the more discouraging. The year's main effort was to be a French attack on the great German angle on the River Aisne. This was conceived and organized by Nivelle, the new French "wonder-man" who had supplanted Joffre in winter and whom his countrymen fondly imagined to be the heaven-born general that would give them victory at last. What inspired them with such confidence is hard to say; but Nivelle was sanguine of a huge success and counted upon carrying the heights above the Aisne at a single hammer blow. He was rudely disappointed. Whether the details of his plan were sold by traitors (as many folk affirmed) or whether (as seems more probable) they were captured on the field, the German High Command knew what was coming; they had made their dispositions and the grand coup failed. It is said that the French lost one hundred thousand men on the first day of the attack. Nivelle was then removed; and Pétain took his place with Foch as chief of staff. Meanwhile, though subsidiary to this central operation, the part played by our troops won a more substantial, if limited, success. Attacking in April a few days before Nivelle, we struck hard north of Arras and in a few hours of fighting had captured the long-contested and important Vimy Ridge. Our organization this time was practically perfect; but by now the reinforcements from the Russian front were coming to the Germans, and our further advance was stayed. In June we struck again with the same careful preparation and the same limited success, carrying the Messines - Wytschaete Ridge, which lies south-east of Ypres. This stroke, however, was in reality the prelude to a subsequent operation farther north. In the hope of turning the whole German line in Flanders, or, even if that failed, of rolling it away from the submarine harbours of the

Flemish coast, we undertook from August onwards a prolonged and obstinate offensive which was chiefly aimed at the Ridge of Passchendaele north-east of the Ypres salient. Unhappily the weather broke; and we made but little headway. The autumn rains turned the low-lying country into a quagmire, and our men were brought to a standstill, in part by the enemy's new system of armoured "pill-box" forts, but even more by the atrocious Flanders mud. One more blow, which came within an ace of startling triumph, was aimed in November at the Hindenburg line itself. Tanks, stealthily brought forward, were here used to break the wire in the place of the normal preparation of artillery. Thus, for once, the enemy were taken by surprise; cavalry were actually sent through the breach; and we had almost rushed the important town of Cambrai, when German reinforcements were once more hurried to the scene and our line rolled back again. Thus, from the start to finish of 1917, failure and the dark shadow of Russia's slow defection dogged us at every step. Yet our cup of misfortune was even yet not full. It was not for nothing that during the whole year the enemy had been so strangely quiet. Their blow was still to fall; and this time it fell on Italy.

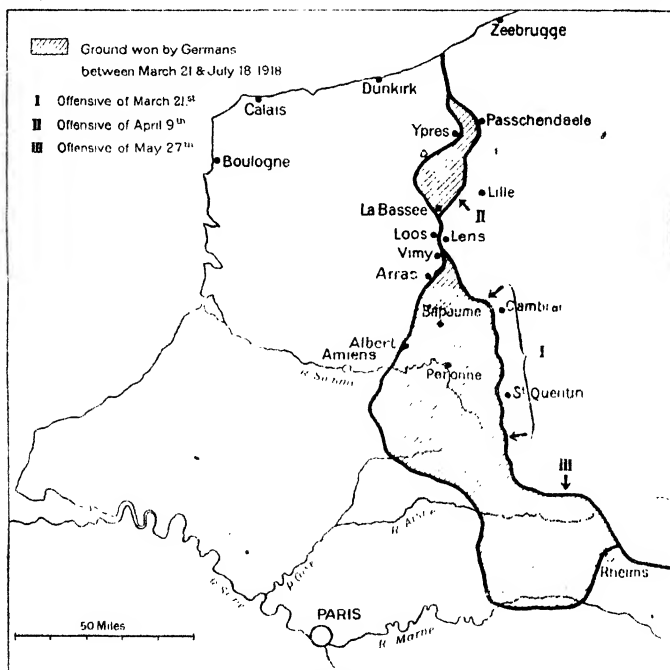
In their campaign against the Austrians, the Italians had been fighting on a two-faced front. To the north of Venice they were pressing up through the mountain passes which lead to the Trentino, the province which the war of Italian liberation had left still "unredeemed." East of Venice they were endeavouring to force a passage across the Isonzo valley towards the great Adriatic harbour of Trieste. The rocky plateau, called the Carso, which overlooks this valley, was a position of enormous natural strength; but Cadorna, the Italian *generalissimo*, was not to be put off; and throughout the campaigning seasons of 1916 and 1917 a great battle had been fought and substantial progress made in this direction. The Italians, however, were still far distant from their goal; and their spirits flagged at this deferment of their hope. Signs of their discouragement were quickly noted by the German High Command; and a cam-

paign of insidious propaganda was begun among their troops. Leaflets dropped by aeroplanes, and rumours spread by spies assured them that Italian lives were being sacrificed to the selfish machinations of perfidious England; and in part the wearied soldiery believed it. In any case they were seriously demoralized when, in the late October of 1917 and shortly before our own offensive at Cambrai, a German general, commanding German troops as well as Austrian, fell suddenly upon the north-east corner of their Isonzo battle line. The thrust was delivered at Caporetto on a misty day. The shock of the surprise and the terror and prestige of German arms combined with the low condition of the Italians' own morale to produce a catastrophe unequalled in the war. The whole of Cadorna's Eastern front collapsed like a sand castle; and, as it fell back in utter rout towards Venice and the plains of Padua, much of the northern army was exposed to the danger of an attack upon its rear and was compelled to follow suit. It was not, in fact, until the line of the Piave River had been reached that Cadorna's forces rallied and a stand was made. Meanwhile, at Italy's appeal, French and British reinforcements had been hurried south to help her. The moral effect of this support put fresh heart into the defenders of her soil; and the Piave line was held. This call on our resources was in one sense most unfortunate; for it greatly weakened our offensive at Cambrai. Yet, if we had not gone, Italy's fidelity would at least have been sorely strained; and indeed this timely co-operation of the Allied armies was the sole source of comfort in an outlook of unmitigated gloom. For a third year in succession autumn had found our fortunes at their lowest ebb. In 1915 Serbia and Russia had collapsed. In 1916 Rumania; and now in 1917 it was the turn of Italy. Yet the disaster brought one benefit. Under the stress of stern necessity we had begun to learn the lesson, so fruitful in its consequence before a year was out, that the Allies' many fronts were essentially one whole, and that in the co-ordination of our strategy lay the sole prospect of success. Unity of command was still slow—too

slow—in coming ; but the principle of the united front was then first reluctantly admitted when we went to the reinforcement of the Piave line.

VI. THE LAST YEAR

Seeking to forecast the chances which the fourth year of war would bring us, few could have reckoned the prospect



THE LAST GERMAN OFFENSIVE.

as inspiring. Disillusionment had done its work ; and there was a new spirit of bitterness abroad in England. Our heavy losses in the field had broken many hearts. The enemy's aeroplane bombardment of London and the coast had set people's nerves on edge ; and, if the nation faced

the ordeal of the coming spring with resolution to endure, there was also something in its temper, which had not been seen before—a craving for reprisals and revenge. France, whose ordeal had been more prolonged and more searching than our own, was equally saddened ; but she too was bracing herself to a fresh effort. After a period of doubt and hesitation, Clemenceau, the sturdy patriot of seventy-six, had taken up the reins from the faltering hands of other politicians ; and he would not hear of peace. Nor was his confidence unreasoning ; for to the Germans, too, this was no less an anxious moment. They knew well enough that their time was short. By autumn at latest America's new army would be fit to take the field ; and it was now or never if they were to win the war. Yet the opportunity was favourable. The peace just made with Russia gave them such an advantage on the Western front as they had not enjoyed since the battle of the Marne. Ludendorff was convinced that he could break the Allies' battle line, and he was determined to stake all on a last desperate throw. The point selected for the grand attack was on the Hindenburg line sector between Arras and St. Quentin ; and the choice was good. For the frontage here held by our Fifth Army under Gough was perilously extended. One bayonet to a yard was the inadequate allowance. The trench system we had dug was still very far from perfect. There were no reserves. And, when on that fatal Thursday the 21st of March, the fierce onslaught was delivered through the mists of dawn, our line was broken in a yawning gap. Forty German divisions against fourteen of our own were odds beyond the resistance of even British pluck ; and Gough's army fell back westwards in terrible disorder. Past Bapaume and Peronne they went, and over the old battle-fields of the River Somme, till the town of Amiens itself was threatened ; and, if that fell, then all indeed was over ; for our whole system of rear communications would in such a case be cut. But in the nick of time the rot was stayed. Our Third Army, pivoting on Arras, held firm on the north flank. The speed of the Germans

faltered, as they drew farther from their base. French troops arrived ; and powerful reinforcements were hurried out from England ; and soon within sight of the very towers of Amiens the enemy was held. Yet he still possessed the initiative of battle ; and by swift movement of his forces could strike fresh blows where we were weak. On the 9th of April a second drive began in the neighbourhood of Lille ; and it was the same tale as in the south, though on a lesser scale ; ground which had taken us three years to win was lost in as many days. Neuve Chapelle passed back again to German hands ; Wytschaete went, and Messines and Mount Kemmel in their rear. Ypres alone was held ; and even there, before our troops had stemmed the onrush, we were forced to draw back from the low hills of Passchendaele. It was the turn of the French next. Another swift movement of Ludendorff's reserves and on 27 May their Aisne divisions were taken by surprise ; and, before they could recover, the enemy was racing south along the road to Paris. In three days they reached the Marne. But the point of their thrust was narrow ; and they were compelled to pause till it could be broadened out. The respite was enough. The French resistance stiffened ; the vigour of the enemy's impetus was spent ; for the moment at any rate he had shot his bolt. And meantime the plans were forming in the brain of one who knew that the German Army could be beaten and who meant to beat it. At the crisis of the March retreat, a step was taken which was nearly four years overdue. Foch had been appointed to command, not the French forces only, but the whole Allied Army of the Western front. " You give me a lost battle," he had said, " and you expect me to be grateful." On few men indeed was a heavier burden ever laid ; for on his decisions now hung the fate of the whole world.

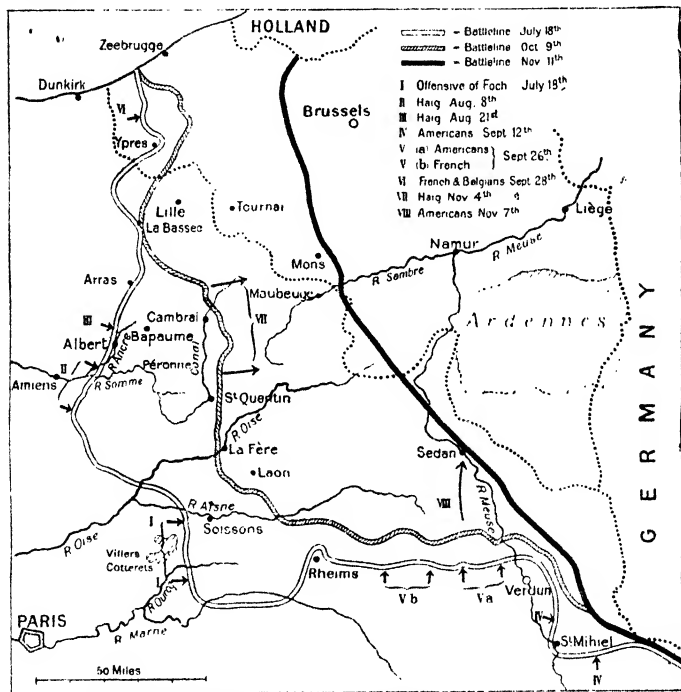
For the Allies the worst was over ; and by midsummer it was possible to breathe again. The enemy's three blows, aimed first at Amiens, then at the Channel Ports, and, last of all, at Paris, had each in turn been parried ; and the lull which followed in the month of June betokened his temporary

exhaustion. To us, on the other hand, every day and week that passed was now clear gain. Crowded transports were rushing troops across the Atlantic; already over a million Americans had landed on French soil, and a few, whose training was sufficiently complete, had been put into the line. But, when all is said, not even the most extravagant of optimists could then have dared to prophesy that by autumn the war would have been won. We did not yet know Foch. . . . The last of the three great German inroads upon the Allied line had formed a gigantic triangle with its apex pointing towards Paris and its south side resting on the Marne. Their next effort was directed against this southern side;¹ and on 15 July they were actually advancing on the river's lower bank. Foch had foreseen the move, had foreseen, too, that their concentration in this southerly direction would leave the triangle's west side ill guarded, and he was ready. Among the woods of Villers-Cotterets he had an army of reserve in hiding; and, at the moment when the enemy were fully committed to their new offensive, this army was let loose. On 18 July—a date ever to be remembered as the turning of the tide—it crashed through into the salient, threatening Soissons and, more important still, taking the whole southern line of Germans in the rear. Back they had to come almost as quickly as they had first descended. There was no such actual rout as in 1914; but by the beginning of August they were once more upon the Aisne. Foch's blow, however, had done more than relieve the threat to Paris. It had restored to the Allies the initiative of battle; and from that time forward the enemy were not allowed a moment's rest. The last phase was now at hand.

The masterpiece of strategy which in three short months was to drive the German army out of France is not to be unfolded in a few brief lines. It is enough to say that Foch was like a boxer whose opponent's parries come always just too late; and, while the feeble defence goes fumbling

¹ East of Rheims also the Germans were attacking; but there, after making a little ground, they were definitely held.

towards the point last threatened, a fresh and deadly blow is driven home elsewhere. So it was that, before the Germans had recovered from the shock of the first surprise, Haig had followed it with such another. On 8 August he broke through east of Amiens; and, while the Germans struggled to patch this gap in turn, he hammered them



FOCH'S OFFENSIVE, JULY-NOVEMBER, 1918.

back to the outskirts of Bapaume. So the blows rained down—right, left, and right again—till by the first week in September we had made an actual breach in the Hindenburg defences between Arras and Cambrai. The German soldiers were still fighting with a dour and dogged courage; but they knew themselves outplayed. They could no

longer cope with our resources. Hundreds of tanks were travelling forward with the infantry's advance. There were now more shells in our depôts than we could usefully employ; and once, it is said, we fired all but a million in a single day. Above all, our men were buoyant with the flush of their success. Nothing could stop them now. Covering Cambrai and St. Quentin there was a deep canal, which, properly defended, would have been a far worse obstacle than any trench; but even this was not enough. With rafts and life-belts our troops plunged in and, swimming or floating over, occupied the further bank. Where the canal was dry, large tanks, descending to the miry bottom, formed of themselves a bridge whereby smaller tanks could cross. Such tactics and such a spirit were irresistible; and early in September, while the French entered St. Quentin, Cambrai fell to us. The Germans were now fairly on the run; and east of this town at the beginning of November Haig played his final stroke. A crushing victory, won on a front of thirty miles, broke the enemy's resistance once for all. Foch's net was closing in, and the end was near; for meanwhile the other Allied armies had been moving forward too. A Franco-Belgian combination had rolled back the Germans from the Flemish coast, past Lille, past Tournai, and a good half-way to Brussels. In the south the Americans also were now upon the move; they had first tried their novice hand at flattening out the enemy's salient at St. Mihiel, south of Verdun. Then, turning to the north of the great fortress and working in close co-operation with the French upon their left, they had struck up towards Sedan. The spurt of their early progress, when a single day's advance made seven miles, was too impetuous to last; but they struggled on; and at the beginning of November they, too, gave a fresh leap forward, this time to the capture of Sedan. Fate showed a grim irony in these last moments; and, within three days of Sedan's fall, our troops had entered Mons. For the German army, weakened by its losses and distracted by continuous defeat, the game was now played out. It was in an

impossible position, pinned with its back against the rugged barrier of the Ardennes hills. Such roads as gave an exit through that broken country eastwards were choked with the confusion of columns in retreat. To escape *as an army* was beyond the Germans' power. One other blow from Foch, and the world would have witnessed a catastrophe, beside which Sedan or Waterloo or Leipsic must have seemed mere bagatelles.

It by no means detracts from the credit due to Foch, or from the decisive nature of his triumphs, that events which occurred elsewhere than the French battle-front contributed to the enemy's ultimate collapse. The great combination, which for four and a half years the master hand of Germany had held together, was bound to go to pieces if the master hand itself should fail; and the enemy alliance, when it began to crack, cracked at many points at once. The weakest link in the chain went first. Bulgaria was at no time a very enthusiastic member of the league. Her quarrel was with Serbia; but she did not love the Germans and she loathed the Turk. Her heart, therefore, was no longer in the business; and her collapse was swift. Our Salonica army had recently improved in health and confidence and numbers. It had lately been reinforced by volunteers from Greece, Venizelos, the patriot statesman, having raised the banner of revolt against the pro-German king and thereby won his countrymen to the cause of the Allies. The remnant of the Serbs had been reorganized and brought into the line; and they were itching for a chance of their revenge. Franchet d'Esperey, the French commander-in-chief, timed his offensive for the middle of September. He broke the Bulgarian army at a single blow. Within a week he was close upon their frontier. Within ten days an armistice was signed, equivalent to unconditional surrender. It was the turn of the Turk next. Already in the course of the last eighteen months he had received some severe hammering from our armies in the East. In the first months of 1917 Sir Stanley Maude had retrieved the tragedy of Kut, advancing up the Tigris in a dashing style, winning

a great victory on Townshend's old battle-field at Ctesiphon, and entering Bagdad within a fortnight from the start of his great drive. Mesopotamia being thus disposed of, it remained for us to conquer Palestine. There failure had dogged us till in June of 1917 Sir Edmund Allenby took over the command. In the following winter he had turned the Turks' position by the capture of Gaza on the coast, swept north towards Jerusalem, and a fortnight before Christmas entered it. His best troops were then recalled to France to meet the great March offensive; but Indian regiments were drafted in, and in September Allenby, too, was ready to deal the knock-out blow. On the 19th he fell upon the Turks among the Samaritan hills and broke them utterly. The cavalry, bursting through, crossed the Plain of Esdraelon and cut in upon their rear. Soon there was no Turkish army left to block our progress; we overran Damascus and pushed on into Aleppo when on the last day of October the Turk, too, cried out for peace. Even more dramatic was the collapse of Austria. The loyalty of her peoples to the Hapsburg Emperor had scarcely ever proceeded from anything but fear; but a tradition of obedience is not quickly broken off, and the success of German arms throughout the war had cowed the spirit of the malcontents. In 1916, however, the death of the aged Francis Joseph had removed a figure-head whom all at least respected; and disaffection was now rife throughout the country, not least among the regiments on the Piave battle-front. Such was the state of things when suddenly in the middle of October the victorious Austrian army of the preceding autumn broke and ran like rabbits before the attack of the British and Italian troops. Simultaneously a rising was effected at Trieste and the Italians occupied the city from the sea. Austria, too, was out of the war.

Thus Germany was left alone to face the music; and, for all her seeming strength, she was in no condition for a single-handed fight. A bluff which has come as near to triumph as had hers fails but the more disastrously when

the bitter truth of failure is revealed. For four years Germany had lived upon a lie, pretending that her cause was just and that God was on her side. The skilful manipulation of military news had hypnotized the civil population into a belief in certain victory. But continuous advertisement of German prowess had brought the end no nearer; and the hungry, disheartened people grew weary of the war. The Allies lost no chance of playing on such feelings; and skilful use of propaganda turned the enemy's favourite weapon to his own undoing. Leaflets were scattered from the air or smuggled in through Holland, exhorting the Kaiser's subjects to shake off a tyranny which had brought them to this pass; and, despite the frantic denunciations of Hindenburg himself, the working classes of the Fatherland began to feel a doubt whether they were not after all the Emperor's dupes. Their conversion was completed by the idealistic and disinterested diplomacy of the President of the United States. In language of lofty sentiment Wilson paved the way towards peace. He announced that, in the first place, no parley could be held with the Kaiser or his ministers, but only with the elected representatives of the German folk itself. Provided, however, that a new Government were formed upon democratic lines, he undertook to use his offices to promote an honest peace; and the general principles which should govern such a peace he defined in his famous document, the Fourteen Points. The effect of this pronouncement was to raise the flagging hopes of the weary populace. Disloyal murmurs, hitherto but barely whispered, now rose in swelling chorus. At the beginning of November, quickly as Foch's grapple closed on the beaten foe, events behind the front moved quicker still. The naval crews at Kiel and other seaports broke out in mutiny; and even among the long-suffering, obedient masses the taint of revolution spread apace. The worm had turned at last; and it was clear that the Kaiser now must yield or perish. Broken by the knowledge that his country was in ruins and that its ruin was the outcome of his own misguided rule, the wretched man lost nerve, signed a deed of abdication

on the ninth day of November, and escaped across the frontier into Holland. A new government was formed by the Socialistic leaders in the Reichstag; and on the 11th of November an armistice, dictated in the main by Foch, was accepted and declared. The Allied troops went forward to the occupation of the Rhineland towns; huge quantities of guns and other military material were surrendered in due course; and the German Fleet—worst of all humiliations—made rendezvous with ours for the first time and the last. Whatever should have happened when the armistice was over, the war itself could never be renewed. The Germans had been beaten, and beaten because, in the words of the man who beat them, they “forgot that above men there is a moral law, and above warfare Peace.”¹

¹ Foch writing about Napoleon.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PEACE

I

WAR is a disease from which the process of recovery must needs be slow and painful ; and even the fruits of victory, which in prospect seem so golden, are apt to turn to ashes in the hand. Peace indeed returns ; but the settlement which brings it is nearly always in the nature of a compromise, satisfying no one. To some its terms seem harsh, to others unwarrantably tender ; so that the authors of the contract earn little but abuse. And to all this the Treaty signed at Versailles in 1919 was no exception. The Great War had been a clash between two rival theories, two opposite ideals for the future of the world. On the one hand was the ideal of the Central Empires, standing for an obsolete tradition of the past and the irresponsible ambition of the old-world kings—monarchical authority, diplomatic insincerity, the power of the sword to decide the course of history, and the right of the strong to dominate the weak. It was an ideal which Europe had long since learnt to loathe and which it had already defeated in many a hard-fought struggle ; and the Kaiser himself was no more than a bad copy of his own forbear the Great Frederick or of Frederick's prototype, Louis XIV. The Allies, upon the other hand, whose task it had been once more to overcome this evil thing, professed a creed of politics which was precisely its reverse. They stood for democracy and the people's right to manage their own affairs, for nationality and the freedom of small states, and, above all,

for an international relationship of mutual toleration and goodwill. But ideals are brittle things and difficult to square with the rude angularities of solid fact. The conclusion of the war brought forward problems which neither of the combatants, while combatants, had faced; and so it was that, when peace arrived at last, not one of them was sure of his own mind, and there was a strange confusion of ideas in either camp. The Germans hovered uneasily between an obstinate allegiance to the outworn creed which ruined them and the unfamiliar doctrines of republican self-government which they had so recently embraced to save their skin. The aristocratic Junkers, upon their part, deplored their own lost supremacy and would have dearly loved to see the Kaiser back. The masses showed more balance; and, while they declined to imitate the wild experiments of Bolshevik Russia, they equally resisted a return to the old régime. When a hairbrained attempt was made by the Kaiser's partisans to tamper with the troops and upset the People's Government, the whole German nation went spontaneously on strike: the coup collapsed for want of any to support it, and the spell of Kaiserdom was seen to have lost its hold. But the terms of the Versailles Treaty were not, after all, for Germany to formulate. The representatives of the four leading Powers—France, Italy, America, and England—were the true arbiters of that great settlement; and among them too there was now a wide divergence of ideals. According as the nation which each stood for had suffered much or little from the war, it was difficult or easy to shake free from the ingrained prejudice of old world politics, and prefer the enlightened arguments of reason to the selfish exploitation of triumphant force. President Wilson, still riding the high horse of his magnanimous philosophy, ignorant of the niceties of European problems, and divorced from all direct interest in the territorial settlement, was desirous above all things to establish the world's peace upon those abstract principles of generosity and justice which he had long been preaching to a world at war. But the prophet, in his rapture over the

imminent millennium, had neglected to take count of the jealousies of nations. Those jealousies persisted, none the less; and for all the President's preaching the millennium he had pictured was not realized in fact. The ox unaccountably refused to be friendly with the lion. The wolf was still as eager as ever to devour the lamb. Thus Italy, for example, had been promised a large strip of the Adriatic seaboard; and, although its Slav inhabitants should by rights have had the choice of it, she insisted on her claim. Poland, too, had "national aspirations" of a most flamboyant character. But the worst offender against the President's philanthropy was France. For her, realities bulked larger than ideals. During more than forty years she had been living under the instant terror of the German bully; for four years and over his grip had been upon her very throat; and now she was determined, since the chance was offered, to disable him for ever of his power to harm. There was even talk in Paris of annexing the whole country west of Rhine; and, if that should not prove feasible, there was still the plan of exacting an indemnity sufficient to cripple Germany for half a century to come. Between this view, of which Clemenceau was sponsor, and the view of the President of the United States, our own representative at the Conference stood midway. Lloyd George was still by sympathy a Liberal, and, as a Liberal, anxious to forget the ugly past and build the world anew upon the broader basis of international goodwill. A natural tenderness for France, however, bound him to give generous recognition to her claims; and a rash undertaking to exact an impossible indemnity, put forward at the General Election of December and intended to catch votes for the continuance of the Coalition Government, had tied his hands yet further at the Council Board. Yet Lloyd George can trim his sails adroitly on occasion; and more than most among the delegates his mind was open to the appeal of common sense. Of Germany's crime against the world and of the justice of requiring due recompense at her hands there was no question or dispute; the only point of difference between the Allied delegates was how much should be required

Clemenceau, like Shylock, was for having his "pound of flesh." Wilson wished to preserve the German people from political extinction, taking his stand on the forgotten Fourteen Points. Lloyd George held the scales; and in the issue his weight was thrown rather upon the side of France.

Such then was the attitude of the three leading figures of the Conference which early in 1919 assembled for the discussion of the Peace in the great Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles. It was a lordly gathering. Almost every nation under heaven was represented there; for, by the time the war was over, there was scarcely a neutral left. Germany's smaller neighbours, it is true—the Swiss, the Danes, the Dutch, the Scandinavians—had not ventured to attack her. But, outside the bounds of Europe, she had now not a single friend. Japan, by a previous treaty of Alliance, had been with us from the start. Portugal had soon joined us, proud to repay our services of a century ago. Then in the closing year, when the German's gross brutality in his submarine campaign had proved him to be the enemy of humanity at large, the rest came tumbling in to share our victory. China had declared war, though she clearly could not fight. The South American republics did the same. Even obscure chieftains of equatorial kingdoms made pompous proclamation of their adhesion to the cause. So now all the world was gathered to the great Tribunal. Only the representatives of our defeated foes were left outside the door.

As at the Congress of Vienna which concluded the Napoleonic wars, so here the work performed may be classed under three heads—the punishment of the enemy, the redistribution of the map, and (once again) an effort more earnest and more hopeful to bind the nations of the world together in a league of lasting peace.

Germany's punishment was terrible—though not more terrible than the crime which brought it on her head. The chief penalty imposed by the unanimous opinion of her judges was that she should make good, so far as possible, the havoc of the war. But how far it was possible proved more difficult to say. Wilson in his Fourteen Points had

limited the claim of reparation to the damage inflicted on civilian property alone. The French went further, demanding that Germany should shoulder the whole burden of the cost; and Lloyd George had already assured the British public that she should pay to the last mite. Sums were named running to the unimaginable total of fifteen or twenty thousand million pounds; and, though the amount was left unsettled when the peace was signed, it has since been fixed at six and a half thousand. But it has yet to be discovered in what form it can be paid—whether in exports or in labour or in worthless German notes;—still less does it seem easy to exact the payment, should Germany refuse it. Some say she cannot pay; others that she can; but in any case her task has not been rendered easier by the enormous territorial losses to which the Versailles settlement condemned her. In the West, Alsace-Lorraine, with its valuable minefields, went back of course to France. In the East, a large portion of East Prussia was made over to the Poles, so that the remnant which Germany retains is actually severed from her frontier. Silesia, however, which also the Poles claimed, was left to decide its own destiny by vote and elected to stay German.¹ The northern half of Schleswig was given a like option and voted itself back under the Danish rule. Germany's chief losses, however, lay beyond the seas. In the course of the war, all her colonies had one by one been captured—her Chinese station at Kiao-chow by the Japanese, her Pacific islands by the Australians, the Cameroons by Franco-British troops. The South African army under General Smuts had fought two strenuous and difficult campaigns to win German South-West and German East Africa. None of the captors was ready to relinquish the spoils to Germany; nor, in the interest of the native populations, did it seem desirable to do so. Accordingly, by a stroke of the pen, the whole Colonial Empire, built up with so much industry and effort, was unconditionally cancelled; and Germany was left without an inch of territory beyond the seas.

¹ The Poles protesting, however, it was subsequently repartitioned.

Such transference of territory in various continents involved, of course, considerable alteration of the map. But an even more important and far-reaching transformation



THE NEW EUROPE, 1921.

occurred in the near East. The principle of settlement to which the Allies had here been pledged was based on the democratic doctrine of "self-determination"; they held, in other words, that for all peoples great or small there is an

inherent right to determine under what flag they wish to live. Now the Austrian Empire had for centuries held sway over subject populations of non-German blood—Rumanians, Czeko-Slovaks, Poles, Jugo-Slavs, Italians. These were now free upon the Allies' principle to determine their own destiny; and not the least outcome of the Versailles settlement was to break the Austrian Empire into fragments. Italy regained her Trentino and Trieste; across the Adriatic she obtained a small strip of coast; but not half of what she wanted. For there a new and powerful kingdom was established embracing, along with the main Dalmatian coast, Montenegro, Serbia, Herzegovina, and Bosnia—a solid Jugo-Slav reunion. Hungary, stripped of Transylvania, which Rumania now recovered, became a separate and independent State; and Austria, thus reduced to an insignificant Republic, saw established on her north a new and virile power—the Czeko-Slovaks of Bohemia, while beyond the Carpathians the Poles absorbed Galicia and threatened in the heyday of their new-found strength to prove a thorough nuisance to their neighbours. The disadvantages of such a settlement have shown themselves already. For, unhappily, among these youthful nationalities, thus suddenly set free, there was a dangerous element of selfish rivalry and crude ambition. The sufferings of war had not availed to damp their martial ardour. Within two years Roumania marched on Hungary and the Poles invaded Russia; and the fertile seeds of many future wars lie in petty jealousies of these heterogeneous States. A more immediate peril was the check which the break-up of the Empire set on the resumption of the normal activities of life. The artificial bond of Hapsburg tyranny had at least made all these peoples commercially one whole. Now, however, the old lines of trade were broken by the new-drawn frontiers. Traditional dissensions prevented the free interchange of produce; and Austria was soon starving, because her former subjects took the mean revenge of refusing her supplies. Whatever else the Versailles settlement has done, it has not bestowed upon the lands of

Eastern Europe the promised blessings of prosperity and peace. The problem of Turkey was less difficult. There were indeed discussions over Constantinople's fate; but it was not considered feasible to evict the Turk from Europe, and he remains on sufferance. The bulk of Asia Minor, too, was left him; but Greece, which had joined us, thanks to Venizelos's foresight, was rewarded with a strip of the West coast. North Syria went to France; Palestine; to ourselves; and Mesopotamia, which the Germans so much coveted, fell also into our hands. It is, however, to be noted that in assigning protectorates over these and similar half-civilized communities a new system was evolved. Actual possession was not granted; but the protecting Power is to administer the lands as a trustee to the League of Nations. This in itself is a significant advance upon the old-fashioned notions of the rights of conquest; and, though doubtless there is great advantage to be gained from the commercial exploitation of these backward countries, yet other responsibilities are recognized as binding. Duties, as well as profits, are now to be considered; and in germ at least a new code of international morality has been born into the world.

It had been frequently asserted during the four preceding years that this was a war which would end war; and the "League of Nations" was perhaps the only part of the Versailles settlement which gave promise of fulfilling that prediction. If Wilson was compelled to yield over the remainder of his programme, he was allowed his way at any rate in this; and the winding-up of the prolonged negotiations was actually delayed for many months in order that the details of the "Covenant" might be properly completed and form an integral part of the Treaty to be signed. Of the multitudinous problems which arise from such a project there is here no room to speak. It is enough to say that many statesmen and communities still doubt the practicability of the whole scheme, and that, unless the League's decisions are backed, not by statesmen only, but by the public opinion which these represent, then

clearly means will lack of compelling their acceptance; and the nations must inevitably resort once more to the suicidal alternative of war. Still the experiment seemed worthy of a trial. Some signed in hope that good would come of it; some with the more cynical assurance that at least it could do no harm. The machinery of the League was in due course set in motion; the delegates appointed to sit upon its Council; its Council established at Geneva; its solid work begun; and, before many months were out, its decisions flouted by the irresponsible antics of an elderly Italian poet!¹ It is to be feared that as yet this Parliament of the nations has but little more title to command obedience than the smallest armed State among them; and how slight a hold the idea has won upon the imagination of mankind was proved by the humiliating failure which awaited its author, the President, at home. On recrossing the Atlantic, Wilson invited his countrymen to ratify the Covenant; and they refused. The United States is still outside the League, so deep-seated even now are the suspicion and mistrust which keep the nations from uniting for the salvation of the world. Yet never did the world stand in sorer need of unity. The fabric of modern civilization has been built up on mutual confidence and a closely woven system of international finance. No country now can afford to stand in commercial isolation. Few can even supply for themselves the necessities of life. Trade at this present moment is half-paralysed because every country hesitates to sell goods to its neighbour, doubting its neighbour's ability to pay. Enormous loans of money, too, advanced during the war, have left the continental Governments the debtors of Great Britain and Great Britain the debtor of the United States. The liquidation of these liabilities and the restoration of the world's prosperity can be accomplished only in a fraternal spirit of forbearance and goodwill. It is, in fact, a happy omen, not a reason for despair, that the world is now poor and hungry and

¹ D'Annunzio, who, indignant that the Adriatic port of Fiume should not have been ceded to Italy, raised a band of volunteers and occupied the town.

that trade stands still. For our very need will force us in the end to compose our differences; and, if a League of Nations did not actually exist, economic necessities would oblige us sooner or later to invent one. However bitter may be the learning of the lesson, hard facts force home on us the sober truth, that through hatred man must perish and through love only may he thrive.

Thus, not without false steps and frequent hesitations, the great Conference of Versailles brought tardily to an end its self-appointed task of rebuilding the new world on the foundations of the old. Whether its building was of the best or wisest, the future will determine; but at any rate it was not without a rival in the work of Reconstruction, whose ideals were of a wholly different type. For elsewhere, meanwhile, other builders had been busy; and the foundation on which these built was wholly new. The Bolshevists of Russia, first among the revolutionaries of history, had essayed to tear up society by the very roots, and were now, so to speak, replanting it head-downwards. Even Robespierre and his colleagues had attempted no such thing. All they did was to sweep away an obsolete political machinery; and the outcome of their handiwork was to give their countrymen a new code of laws and a parliamentary vote. For the normal citizen of revolutionary France life itself was not radically changed. There had been no genuine break in the evolution of civilized society. But the great upheaval of 1917 was very much more than a break; it was a yawning gulf. Russia before Lenin and Russia after Lenin were two utterly different things. Bolshevism had swept over the country like a hurricane and blotted out the past. It interchanged the whole position of the classes. It allowed to no one but the manual workers only the right to participate in government or business, or even, if it came to that, to exist at all. The well-to-do classes who had hitherto lived in comfort on the interest of their capital were stripped bare of all they had. Archdukes and duchesses were reduced to selling matches. Millionaires begged in the street. For in the most literal

sense the Bolsheviks applied the old commandment—"By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread;" and the "idle bourgeois," as the middle class were called, were simply left to starve. Meanwhile the workers, entering eagerly upon their stolen heritage, proposed to put in practice their own beautiful dreams of socialistic theory and to have "all things in common," like the early Christian saints. Nothing, according to the formula of Lenin, was to belong to individuals; the railways, the factories, even the peasants' corn, all was henceforward the property of the State. Yet the experiment was doomed to inevitable failure, because, even among Russian working men, the human instinct for amassing wealth is stronger than the instinct for sharing it with others. The peasant, despite Lenin's exhortations, has insisted on regarding his corn crops as his own. The industrial workers have deliberately idled at the State's expense; and the production of the factories has shrunk beyond belief. The population of the towns is perishing by slow starvation; misery, destitution, and despair have supplanted the bright vision of a Workers' Paradise. Nevertheless, contrary to the confident prediction of its enemies, Bolshevism has retained its hold on Russia, and this notwithstanding every effort to unseat it. Lenin indeed had provoked the hostility of neighbouring States by declaring that he would carry the workers' revolution into every land where the Capitalist still holds sway. At this—and not unnaturally—Western Governments felt anxious. They were none too certain how their own workers might behave; and somewhat half-heartedly, as though doubtful of their cause, they took up the challenge. No grand scale operation was, in fact, attempted; but the reckoning was that, if outside help were given them, the Russian people would themselves arise and throw off the monstrous tyranny. So in 1918 a British expedition was sent out by way of the White Sea, and a tentative offensive was begun from Archangel. It was an utter failure. The Russian people, oddly enough, showed no signs of wanting it, and our men had to be brought back. But we were not to be

discouraged; and when the Russian general, Koltchak, raised the anti-Bolshevist standard in Siberia, we sent out men and munitions to assist him. It was equally in vain: his troops were tempted to desertion by Lenin's propaganda, and before the attack of Trotsky's Red contingents he was put to utter rout. Like fate befell Denikin, who attempted the same tactics in the south. The French might send him officers and England lend him tanks; but from the Russian folk itself he got no backing. Half fearful, it would seem, of a return of Tsardom, half cowed by the terror of the Reds' ferocity, they were either unwilling or unable to shake off their Bolshevik masters. The fact is that their semi-civilized society, so long accustomed to the iron control of monarchical authority, is not yet ripe for true self-government. It needs a strong-handed discipline to hold the unwieldy, helpless, and distracted realm together; and that, pending the arrival of a better, the Bolshevik Government supplies.

II.

On the 28th of June, 1919, more than six months after the declaration of the armistice and five years to the very day from the fateful crime committed in the Serajevo streets, the Treaty of Versailles was duly signed by the unwilling representatives of Germany. Austria accepted her fate a little later; and Turkey last of all. Peace had returned; and with it, not the good things we had expected, but disorder, rancour, suspicion, and bitter disillusionment. From whatever point of view it be regarded, this is a sick and sorry world; nor have we ourselves in England, as is but too sadly evident, escaped the infection of its maladies. The ordeal, under which great empires had gone down in utter ruin, could scarcely fail to shake the foundations of our own. For us, who hold dominion over a dozen different countries, this was a testing moment. For the cry of liberty takes on new meanings in the mouth of those that use it; and the very gospel of self-determination is now

seen to be double-edged. There are peoples within the Empire who, with some show of justice, can claim its application to themselves; and, if the answer be that they are not yet fit for liberty, such an answer is no medicine for their discontent. India, for example, seethes with a deep unrest; and, though generous concessions have latterly been granted, and the natives admitted to a larger share in the country's government, the fundamental grievance still remains. England rules; and, however mild or beneficent her yoke, it stinks in the nostrils of the Nationalists. Fanatical, unbalanced, and embittered, but often versatile and deeply read, these men have learnt the catchwords of the Western world's ideals; and democratic doctrines are now preached throughout a country in which nine-tenths of the inhabitants can neither read nor write. Agitators play upon the ugly passions of the fickle populace; and there have been moments when a repetition of the Mutiny seemed imminent. White men have been murdered; and at Amritsar and elsewhere the British garrison has taken bloody toll of threatening mobs. The future is still dark; the clouds are low; but of one thing we may be certain. Only the cool hand and the unswerving justice which in the past have availed to keep India ours can guide it safely through the shoals which lie ahead; and, if the task seems difficult, we should do well to recollect that it was we ourselves who sought it at the first. Nor does the trouble in India stand alone. What agitators there are urging and will urge for years to come has already been accomplished in a neighbouring land. Egypt was never ours in the same sense that India is; and we had pledged ourselves to leave it in due course. The call which took us there was undeniable. The justice of our rule is beyond dispute; but the demand for liberty, stirred to more vigorous life by the upheaval of the war and still more by the conditions of the democratic peace, has now become so loud and so insistent that we must bow to it. As advisers we went to Egypt, and, as advisers, we shall remain; but the real authority of government goes back to native hands, and, whatever

benefits of prosperity and peace our brief occupation has bestowed upon the country, it lies henceforward with the Egyptian folk itself to develop them or to let them slip away.

In one other dependency—and that more vital still than India or than Egypt—the right of our hegemony had yet again been vigorously arraigned. As an educated and civilized community, Ireland possessed claims to self-determination which those more backward countries cannot boast. Her proximity to England, on the other hand, made the problem of releasing her a hundredfold more difficult; nor did the treacherous blow which she dealt us at the crisis of the war give ground for putting trust in her good faith. The Dublin insurrection of 1916 was easily suppressed, but not easily forgotten. The memory rankles still; but among the rebels its failure was no signal to relax. Sir Roger Casement, whom the Germans sent across to lead the crazy venture, paid forfeit with his life; but there were other daring spirits to carry on the battle, and Irishmen by thousands to obey their call. In part by an elaborate propaganda which evoked the Celt's inherent love of liberty and passion for a fight, in part by a campaign of ruthless terror, which cowed loyal citizens into silence or support, the Sinn Féin organization won such hold on Ireland as not Wolfe Tone nor O'Connell nor Parnell himself can ever have enjoyed. The British Government was thus brought face to face with an unprecedented crisis. Such offer of Home Rule as it could contemplate was now scorned as valueless; complete independence and a self-contained République was the least that would satisfy Sinn Féin. Anarchy reigned throughout the island. Policemen were assaulted and left dead in the public streets; law-abiding civilians, suspected by the rebels of hostility to the cause, were dragged from their beds and shot. Protests were unavailing; and it was clear that some sterner policy was overdue. Lord French went out as Viceroy; and presently the forces of the Crown began to turn the tables. Sinn Féiners were opposed by armed detachments. Fierce

skirmishes ensued among the hedgerows. Machine-guns swept the streets; and (what did us little credit) reprisals were inflicted on the township or the village where outrage had occurred. Yet there were still reserves of British statesmanship to draw on; and, when in 1921 a truce was called and negotiations opened with the Sinn Féin leaders, a generous compromise was soon effected. While Ulster was left free to join in or stand aloof, the rest of Ireland was accorded the full status of a Dominion Colony, self-governing in nearly all respects save allegiance to the Crown. Her recognition of that tie, perhaps, is more verbal than sincerely felt; yet, once the old grievance against England is removed, there is good hope that material interests will bind her to us more closely than ever in the past. For, sentimentalist though he be in the sphere of politics, the Irishman has also his commercial side; and he will learn quickly enough where his real interests lie.

It is a heavy load of cares without that England carries—the constant fear for Ireland, anxieties for India, administrative problems in a dozen new protectorates, and wide responsibilities in Europe too—yet who shall say but that her worst perils lie within? When hostilities were over, and our fighting men came home, Lloyd George assured them that they were returning to a new and better England, “a land fit for heroes to dwell in.” The sequel has been a mocking comment on that prophecy. For here, too, as in the larger world, the times seem out of joint. The “reconstruction,” so ardently discussed by politicians, has been a still-born project; and rhetoric is ill able to repair the wastage of the war. The fact is, that during four long years the nation’s wealth had been consumed without replacement. Human energies which should have gone to supply the needs of life had been spent on the manufacture of munitions. Millions and millions of money had been blown, so to speak, into space; and by just so much we were the poorer when peace at last returned. For a while indeed trade boomed; but such appearance of prosperity was deceptive. Foreign markets, so eager at first for goods, have now begun to fail us. Our merchants

cannot sell ; so factories stand idle ; and the roll of unemployment, bringing want and suffering to millions, grows apace. Yet economic factors are not alone responsible for the unrest, and discontent which now prevail. For the cause goes deeper. The stream of life, once broken, will not readily flow back into accustomed channels ; and men's minds were profoundly unsettled by the unfamiliar experience of the war. Above all, among the workers there was an intense dissatisfaction with the existing inequalities of wealth and at the same time a growing consciousness of their own strength and importance. During the past four years they had seen in more ways than one that the country's safety depended on themselves. Not merely at the Front, but in the workshop, they had held the keys of victory ; and the Government, fearful of any stoppage which might interrupt supplies, had weakly pandered to their most extreme demands. So Labour had now come to fancy itself all-powerful and to imagine that the hour of its triumph was at hand. That other classes and other parties existed in the State was momentarily forgotten ; but soon came a sharp reminder. When at the close of 1918 Lloyd George appealed to the country for a renewed lease of power, he was enthusiastically hailed by the electorate as the man who won the war, and his Coalition was returned by an immense majority. It was soon evident, however, that, whatever its pretences, his ministry was strongly Conservative at heart. It stood for the preservation of the established order of society and showed but little sympathy for Labour's more extravagant demands. Thus cheated of their hope, the working class grew restive. An ugly temper of impatience was displayed ; and, seeing how successfully the Bolshevists in Russia had overthrown their capitalist oppressors, there was secret talk of copying their tactics here. Even short of actual revolution, Labour had powerful weapons for overriding Parliament and enforcing its own will. A general strike, so the extremists argued, would win by "Direct Action" what indirect or constitutional action had so far

failed to win. By such a method they proposed to dictate the country's policy, to force on the nationalization of the coal-mines, to secure more friendly treatment of Bolshevik Russia, and who shall say what else? It was a tempting project; but it went too far. For it threatened to undermine not merely Lloyd George's ministry, but the fundamental principles of representative government; and the mass of Englishmen are too good Democrats for that. Just when the extremists felt confident of victory, they found their followers deserting them; and, before the efficacy of "Direct Action" could be put to a practical test, it had been voted out of court. But if, as a political weapon, the strike was thus wisely eschewed, this was not to deny its legitimate use for the improvement of wages. On one point at least all sections of the workers were wholeheartedly agreed, that the profits of industry had gone in the past too much to the capitalist's pocket. A larger share henceforward they were determined should be theirs; and during the course of the war they had gone a long way towards attaining it. Wages had risen, because at such a time employers were naturally able to charge more for goods. So, while the cost of living doubled, wages had more than doubled; but, when in course of time the cost of living fell and the workers' wage was threatened with a like reduction, then indeed the trouble began. Labour was determined to retain the war-time increase and refused to be satisfied with a pre-war standard of life. Strikes followed thick and fast; and the resistance came to a head in the great coal miners' struggle of 1921. Plans were laid for marshalling Labour's forces in full strength. Railwaymen and transport workers were to come out in sympathy with the miners, and the "Triple Alliance" thus show a united front. But once again more moderate counsels triumphed and the grand coup failed. For the British working-man is not a fool. He demands a fair share in the national prosperity; but he knows well enough at the bottom of his heart that all the world alike is the poorer for the war, and that even his own wages cannot go unaffected, when

the national prosperity declines. Treated as a reasonable being, he will behave as such; and it is well sometimes to remember that he has not invariably been treated so. The bitterness and prejudice of present times spring from the injustice and repression of the past. The striker of to-day is but having his revenge upon the profiteer of yesterday; and the legitimate successes which Trades Unionism has achieved could never have been won by patient waiting. If the men have much to learn, so also have the masters; and, as it takes two to make a quarrel, it takes two equally to make a peace.

EPILOGUE

1921-1927

I

EUROPE after three years of so-called peace was still a very distressful and distracted Continent. Her problems were due in part to the dislocations and havoc of four years of war, but also in a large measure to those illusions and passions bred of the war, which only an increasingly bitter experience could avail to correct. The heart of the trouble lay in the mentality of France. Actually the most prosperous of European countries, she was nevertheless nervous, ill at ease and financially unstable. She refused to face a taxation adequate to her needs, balancing her yearly budgets on fantastic anticipations of the endless millions to be wrung from Germany. As a result her credit suffered. Months passed. Still reparation payment dallied; and doubts and fears began to rise. Though the Germans were industriously at work and began to seem even relatively prosperous, a rapid depreciation of their paper currency bade fair to produce financial chaos, and placed adequate reparation payments still further off than ever.

At length the French, exasperated by the deferment of their hopes, determined to put on the screw. In January of 1923 M. Poincaré, their ultra-conservative premier, marched an army into the great German coal-mining district of the Ruhr, and there proposed to take reparations in kind. The German miners, in other words, were to be made to work for France. French soldiers occupied the railways; French engineers supervised the mines; yet

strange to say, the Germans did not work with a will. They went on strike, they idled, they even played tricks with machinery and railroad points. The culprits, when caught were arrested; others on mere suspicion were evicted from their homes; the towns were terrorised; but still the output of coal was not what it should have been; and it soon became apparent that the actual gain to France would little more than cover the heavy expenses of the military occupation. In England meanwhile the whole adventure was being watched with sceptical anxiety. Since the Treaty of Versailles patient forbearance had been the keynote of the Government's policy towards France; and even now, though a strong protest was entered against the folly of the Ruhr, an open breach between the two allies was avoided. Such patience met its reward. By the end of spring, 1924, the French began to realise their mistake. There was a sharp fall in the franc, ominous enough when seen in the light of the German mark's recent collapse. M. Poincaré was thrown from office; and an administration of advanced radical views was formed under M. Herriot to clear up the mess. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's Labour ministry, recently risen to power in England, was prepared to assist.

Both Governments gladly availed themselves of the United States' offer to lend expert advisers for the final adjustment of the reparations problem, and Germany's capacity to pay was now for the first time discussed in a truly practical manner; methods of payment were devised; and the scheme known after the name of the American representative, General Dawes, guaranteed not merely the future payment of fixed annual sums to France, but also the immediate stabilisation of Germany's own insecure finances. Its acceptance, therefore, formed a solid foundation for the economic reconstruction of Europe. For hitherto, while the period of uncertainty and tension lasted, no one upon either side of the Rhine could know for certain how he stood.

To the French, however, the settlement meant much

more than this. For them it marked the beginning of a far saner political outlook. Naturally nervous of an enemy who even after defeat appeared impenitent, and who, though now systematically disarmed, still decisively outnumbered her in man-power, France had been thinking at least as much of the future security of her frontiers as of the present solvency of her finance; and the means to that security she had set out to seek through armaments and military alliances. She herself had kept up an army far beyond her immediate peace needs; and beyond her frontiers she had cultivated the friendship of Poland and Czecho-Slovakia, thus striving to encompass Germany on the east as well as on the west with a ring of formidable enemies. Meanwhile to cover the vast sums expended not merely on her own, but on her new friends' armament, she had been compelled to borrow largely, professing herself the while incapable of meeting her former debts. The result of such reckless finance had been the franc's ominous fall; and the truth was slowly being brought home to French minds that armed force is the worst possible remedy for economic troubles. The practical object-lesson of the Ruhr failure was decisive; and henceforth France turned to seek other and more hopeful means of securing her frontiers against future German aggression. She bethought her of the League of Nations.

To England, as was natural, this change in the French attitude was doubly welcome. She had never enjoyed the task of preaching an abatement of reparation claims which was bound to hit her ally far worse than herself. Honest and business-like finance, however, she had consistently held to be the true key to economic recovery; nor, when sacrifices of her own were demanded, had she shrunk from them. It was in this spirit that her Government had met the claim of the American debt. In the early years of the war, and while the United States were still neutral, she had borrowed from them enormous sums, not so much for her own needs as to make loans in turn to her continental allies. When the United States

entered the war at her side, it had been reasonable to hope that such past transactions would be written off ; and now Britain proposed a general cancellation of all inter-allied indebtedness. The Americans, especially since their withdrawal from European entanglements, viewed the matter in a rather different light. They argued with some reason that a Continent which could afford to maintain huge peace-time armaments, could at least afford to honour its obligations. The British Government, though not as yet receiving a penny from their continental creditors, resolved to set the example and pay up.

In 1923, Mr. Baldwin, their Chancellor of the Exchequer, was sent over to New York where he settled the terms for the gradual repayment of the debt, and so established beyond cavil the soundness of his country's financial position. The liabilities incurred during the war were slowly but surely being met. Alone among European countries, England was balancing her budgets year by year out of current taxation ; her credit abroad stood high ; and her reward was that in 1925 the pound sterling recovered its pre-war value of exchange. Of no other European currency can the same be even predicted. France, Italy, and others have indeed come to arrangements with Great Britain for the refunding of their debts ; but what she receives from them is by no means equal to the annual sum which she sends over to America, and some hold that in her generosity to her allies she has gone beyond what she herself can afford. Nevertheless, the economic rehabilitation of other countries is the surest means of return to universal prosperity ; and for this, if for no other reason, British statesmanship was bound to keep close touch with the Continent rather than repeat the policy of withdrawal adopted soon after the close of the Napoleonic wars. But other reasons and other responsibilities were far from being lost to sight ; and not least of these was membership of the League of Nations.

Of the League's undeniable and steadily increasing value successive British Governments have maintained a

consistently high sense. Definite proofs of that value came quickly—the settlement of the Silésian frontier problem, arbitration in a territorial dispute between Finland and Sweden, the salving of Austria from financial bankruptcy, and perhaps most striking of all, the preservation of peace in more than one ugly crisis between the young states of east Europe. To such activities Britain lent full support; her Foreign Secretaries have, whenever possible, attended in person the Assembly of the League; and her Parliament has loyally backed them up. But she has also shown a wise caution in remembering that the League is still in its infancy and in desiring to put upon it no greater burdens than it can reasonably be expected to bear. The Greco-Italian crisis of 1923 affords a case in point. An Italian general was murdered on an Albanian frontier investigation, Mussolini at once served an ultimatum to Athens, bombarded Corfu, and boastfully defied all protests from Geneva. Here, if ever, it seemed that the League's authority was about to be put to the test. But the matter was taken out of its hands. The leading powers' ambassadors, sitting in council at Paris, undertook the decision and without any adequate investigation of the facts inflicted a severe fine upon Greece. In this apparent blow to the League's prestige Great Britain was undoubtedly a leading partner; but a greater and more serious blow was probably averted by preventing Italy's threatened secession from the League. In any case Britain's caution made her unpopular with the smaller states of Europe; and presently it was to earn the disapproval also of the greater.

When on her ultimate withdrawal from the Ruhr adventure France began to turn her thoughts away from the idea of securing her frontiers by a militarist supremacy, she directed them, as we have said, towards the League. It needed at this moment no special acuteness of perception to realise that Europe was heading straight for a competition in armaments similar to that which just ten years earlier had led to the outbreak of the Great War. Some scheme of gradual or partial disarmament seemed

imperative; but this could only be instituted on the basis of universal agreement and under the bond of some powerful guarantee. The suggestion was accordingly put forward at Geneva and embodied in a rough draft or Protocol that all members of the League should pledge themselves to maintain the existing frontiers of Europe, and, if any state's integrity were threatened, to come to its assistance. The Protocol had many friends, the French representative amongst them; but it found one implacable opponent in Great Britain. Among the grounds of her objection which were various, two stand out: first, that to maintain the existing frontiers in perpetuity may be neither just nor desirable; and, second, that a pledge of intervention in distant parts of Europe is too much to expect of a country already loaded with the world-wide responsibilities of Great Britain; and still more is it too much to expect of those other members of the League whose opinion she is bound to consider, her Dominions. For this last reason, if for no other, she was forced to oppose her resistance to a formula, which however well sounding, seemed almost certain to fail, because it attempted too much. To the principle of a mutual guarantee, however, provided it were planned on less comprehensive lines, Great Britain held no such objection; and in the autumn of 1925 Sir Austen Chamberlain,¹ as Foreign Secretary, advanced a modified scheme. Meeting together at Locarno the representatives of Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Belgium agreed to the acceptance of a common pledge to maintain the existing frontiers between Germany and France on the one hand and between Germany and Belgium on the other. The importance of this diplomatic achievement is hard to overestimate. It seemed, indeed, to mark the final exorcism of the war spirit; and, as a further token that old animosities were now to be forgotten, the operation of the Pact was made conditional on the admission of Germany into the League of Nations. That last act of reconciliation was unhappily delayed by the opposition of Brazil, who, piqued at her own exclusion

¹ Mr. Chamberlain was, in point of fact, knighted in honour of this event.

from the League Council, refused to join in the unanimous vote essential to the new member's admission. But this rift was not lasting, and in due course Germany has been admitted once more into the great comity of nations.

France was now satisfied; a new sense of security was in the air; and it remained to press forward measures for a systematic disarmament. So far as land forces are concerned, serious difficulties still stand in the way; and discussions proceed slowly. But the limitation of navies had already made some progress. In 1921, on President Coolidge's initiative, a conference had been held at Washington; and there the United States, Great Britain, France, and Japan had agreed to a limitation of tonnage in respect of capital ships. The problem of cruisers and other craft had still to be threshed out; and in 1927 fresh discussions were opened at Geneva. Unhappily they proved fruitless. The American representatives failed to appreciate how widespread and how vital are the naval needs of the Imperial trade routes. The British Government, while accepting the United States' demand for naval equality, made perhaps too high an estimate of the extent of those needs. The only immediate result was that the British shipbuilding programme was soon after curtailed, the American enormously increased. But there is no need to despair or to suppose that the misunderstanding need last. Once the nations have agreed that war is an unmitigated disaster, bringing even to the victors far more harm than good, it must follow that the sole hope for the future lies in the spirit of mutual co-operation, in methods of friendly give and take rather than of hostile rivalry. It remains therefore to hammer out the details of the compromise, to devise the machinery of arbitration, and finally to learn in the practical school of experience that self-interest is in the long run better served by seeking international justice than by the old-fashioned methods of diplomatic over-reaching and bluff.

II

It has long been a wise and accepted tradition of British politics that continuity of foreign policy should be independent of the alternations of party government; and to this rule the history of the last six years affords no serious exception. Each in their turn, the Foreign Secretaries of successive ministries have played their part and earned their share of credit in the hopeful developments above described. Thus it was Lord Curzon's steadfast dignity that averted at many a crisis the threatened breach with France; Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's unaffected friendliness of manner did much to smooth the path towards Franco-German reconciliation and the acceptance of the Dawes' reparation scheme. Sir Austen Chamberlain, as we have shown, was mainly responsible for the triumph of Locarno. Nor, when we come in turn to consider the course of home politics, is the divergence between Party programmes so wide as might be fancied. The Conservative Party, who have held office for five years out of the six, have taken an increasingly broadminded view of their responsibilities and have embraced policies which their predecessors would have denounced as rank Socialism. They have controlled rents, regulated prices, maintained an unemployment dole upon an unprecedented scale, vastly extended the scope of Old Age and other pensions, and finally by State support of building schemes have done at least as much as their opponents ever could for the solution of the Housing Shortage problem. The Labour Party, on the other hand, though often wild enough in opposition, proved comparatively mild when in office. The attitude of their ministers was for the most part cautiously correct. Mr. MacDonald showed a high sense of his responsibilities abroad. Mr. Snowden's budget was more Liberal than Socialist in tone. Mr. Thomas at the Colonial Office became quickly a thorough-going Imperialist. Even the rank and file of Labour members have grown steadier with time; and the Communist Extremists, when

seeking admission to the Party, have met with polite but continuous rebuff.

In one tragic and conspicuous respect there has equally been little to choose between the two parties; and for the country's acutest trouble neither Conservatives nor Labour have proved able to do much. The number of unemployed in receipt of a weekly dole still continues well above a million; and, though trade has shown at times some sign of an improvement, yet national enterprise must remain at least partially crippled, so long as the profits of the more successful industries are bled for the support of the employees of the less. The Labour Party, it is true, had no great opportunity for introducing Socialist schemes of State organisation; for their tenure of office was limited to a twelve-month; and during all that time they were dependent for a majority vote on the support and goodwill of the Liberals. No heroic or comprehensive remedies have figured in the Conservatives' programme; their aim was twofold—first, in order that industry might, so far as possible, recover of itself, they endeavoured to hasten the return to normal conditions both at home and abroad, by tranquilising the economic unsettlement of Europe, by restoring British credit on foreign exchange, by checking the extravagance of State expenditure and so lowering taxation, by curtailing (though this proved more difficult) the ruinous interruption of strikes. Secondly, they looked for a more positive solution to the problem in the sphere of Imperial relationships. At no time in British history has the Empire attracted more interest or attention. The Prince of Wales has made a tour of the Dominions. The Prime Minister has for the first time visited Canada. In 1924 a vast exhibition of Colonial products was held outside London at Wembley. Millions of folk visited it. School children received special instruction and were taken in hordes to its sights. From these and many other signs it is clear that the responsibilities and opportunities of the Empire are being more and more widely realised. Positive and practical results, however, are less easy to see. Emi-

gration of the surplus unemployed population appears impossible on any large scale. For the British working man, accustomed to the conditions of industrial home-life, is not very eager nor perhaps very competent to work on the land; and the Dominions themselves cannot readily absorb indefinite numbers. There remains one other possibility. It was an old idea of the Conservative Party, as we saw some time back, by establishing a tariff of duties on imports to give special encouragement to Colonial trade through a preferential scale of exemptions. Since the electorate's rejection of the scheme in 1905, it had been left more or less in abeyance; but there were still many of the Conservative members who were ardent Protectionists and who saw in "Imperial Preference" the key to the restoration of British trade. Approval, however, would be needed on both sides of the ocean; much therefore turned on the views of Colonial statesmen and how they regarded the question we must now consider.

The events of the war had exercised a two-fold influence upon the relations between the colonies and the home country. On the one hand, the part played by the Dominions both in the conduct of campaigns and in the negotiations of the Peace Treaty had greatly enhanced their sense of political independence. They had secured for themselves separate representation in the League of Nations; and at the Imperial Conferences held in London in 1923 and 1926 they asserted quite definitely the right to decide for themselves how far they should be bound by the foreign policy of the British Parliament. Thus while still acknowledging an allegiance, they declared their virtual autonomy. The children, in other words, were come to man's estate. This did not mean, however, that they wished to repudiate their parent. On the contrary, the second effect of war-time experience had been to strengthen the ties of sentiment which already helped to bind the Empire together; and further to develop those ties by economic links of commercial independence now appeared an advantageous and obvious step. So it came about that at the Imperial

Conference of 1923 Mr. Bruce, the Australian premier, advocated the institution of a Preferential tariff, favouring the importation of Colonial produce to England. Here then was the Conservative Party's old remedy receiving fresh stimulus from an important quarter. Better trade would mean less unemployment; and the policy was at once adopted as part of the Conservatives' immediate programme. Its possible effect, however, remains an unknown quantity; for the history of 1905 was now to repeat itself and the Electorate would have none of the scheme. To understand how this came about, it will be necessary to review briefly the history of the successive Governments of the period; and to this we must now turn.

Mr. Lloyd George's Coalition Government, which, as we have seen, was elected with an enormous majority soon after the Armistice, was not to survive very long. England has never much loved coalitions; and this one proved no exception to the rule. It had been formed with the idea that as it had best organised war, so it could also best organise peace; but the results had proved disappointing. Promises of speedy reconstruction were not justified by three years of office. The personal ascendancy, too, of Mr. Lloyd George began to lose some of its glamour. His enthusiasm and energy remained, it is true, unabated; but his political judgment seemed often at fault. Thus, when the Greeks invaded Asia Minor, and drove back the Turks on the interior, he was loud in admiration of their prowess. Then shortly after, when the Turks returned the attack with interest, and it seemed as though Constantinople, still under occupation of allied garrisons, might fall into the hands of their troops, he came within an ace of plunging into war with them. The time had come, so the Conservative members of the coalition felt, to shake free from the domination of a leader whom they no longer trusted. In the autumn of 1922 the split came. Mr. Lloyd George resigned; and Mr. Bonar Law took office with a Conservative majority which, after a general election, numbered eighty over both other parties. Next spring

when failing health compelled his retirement, he was succeeded in the Premiership by Mr. Baldwin, lately sprung into prominence through his successful negotiation of the American debt, but otherwise little known to the country. Though lacking the constructive imagination of a Lloyd George, Mr. Baldwin commanded respect by his cultured benevolence and singular honesty of purpose. Himself an industrial employer, he knew something at first hand of the urgency and difficulty of industrial problems; and, what was more, he had a real sympathy with the troubles of the men as well as of the master. The revival of trade he rightly saw to be the only true remedy for unemployment; and at the Imperial Conference of the autumn he was converted in the way above mentioned to the views of his Protectionist colleagues. At the recent election, however, Mr. Bonar Law had given a pledge that, if elected to office, the Conservative Party would not tamper with the existing Free Trade; and Mr. Baldwin's conscience compelled him, before taking further action, to submit the question to a fresh test of the electorate. The result, as we have foreshadowed, was a complete débâcle for his party, though neither Labour nor Liberals taken apart had anything near a majority, yet together they outnumbered the Conservatives by just ninety votes. So Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, counting on the support of Mr. Asquith and the Liberals, formed for the first time a ministry of what was now coming to be called the Socialist Party.

The members of the new Labour or Socialist Government, raw for the most part to administrative responsibility and some of them men of indifferent education, were quite sufficiently occupied in finding their feet without indulging in any wild experiments. Their dependence on the Liberal vote indeed gave them small latitude; and on the whole they acquitted themselves of a difficult task with success. Of Mr. MacDonald's activities as Foreign Secretary—an office which he combined with the Premiership—we have already spoken, and Mr. Snowden as Chancellor of the Exchequer showed a sane and moderate

outlook on the country's financial problems. The real trouble came not from any incapacity of the Socialist leaders, but from the impetuosity and lack of discipline among the rank and file of members. One definite plank in the new Government's programme had been the recognition of the Soviet Republic, and they had opened negotiations in London for a commercial agreement whereby it was hoped to revive trade with Russia through the granting of a loan to that impoverished country. The Bolshevik delegates proved, however, obstinate bargainers and towards autumn the conference broke down. Private Labour members thoughtlessly rushed to the rescue, and without official authority engineered the resumption of parleys. To have gone to work thus behind the Government's back was a grave breach of parliamentary procedure, and the Liberals no less than the Conservatives were at once up in arms. Neither of them liked the Russian treaty; and the Socialists' overthrow seemed imminent. It actually came over another and more trifling issue—the Government's alleged unconstitutional action in withdrawing the prosecution of a Socialist editor. But in the general election which followed it was the Russian question which bulked most large. The Anti-Bolshevik cry, raised by the Conservative candidates, was reinforced in a singular manner. There found its way somehow into the Government's hands and still more mysteriously into the Press, a secret dispatch from Moscow, known as the "Zinovieff letter," which instructed Russian agents to foment sedition among English workers and soldiers. Though the letter was denounced as a forgery by the Russians themselves, its audacious interference in the country's affairs shocked the electorate greatly, and the upshot was that the Socialists were thrown from office and the Conservatives returned with an overwhelming majority of two hundred and more. The Liberals, with a bare membership of forty, suffered virtual extinction.

This was a surprising reversal of the verdict given only twelve months before and many explanations have been given. For one thing, the women's vote—introduced by

the new franchise bill of 1917—was still an altogether unknown and uncertain quantity. There can be little doubt that the growing activity of women in public life is one of the most notable features of the age. Female members of Parliament, female county councillors, and female workers of every sort have aroused among their sex a new interest in politics. All parties would naturally like to think that the women's vote favours themselves; and the Conservatives have recently been contemplating a bill for lowering the age limit of female franchise from thirty to twenty-one. It was further a significant but not uncommon feature of the poll that the total number of votes given to the Conservatives bore no real relation to the enormous majority with which they were returned to power, and in point of fact their members could only claim to represent considerably less than half of the electorate. Nevertheless, the verdict given probably reflected in a broad way the opinion of the country. There was no desire either for the rash experiment in Socialist legislation which a true Labour majority would have threatened nor yet for conciliatory dealings with foreign revolutionary theorists who had already brought their own country to the verge of ruin. When, therefore, Mr. Baldwin at the opening of 1925 promised a period of tranquillity, he was striking the desired note. By a curious irony of fate, however, tranquillity was precisely what Mr. Baldwin could not give.

In normal times the gradual economic recovery of the Continent should by now have been reflected also in a renewal of English prosperity; and there were signs indeed that trade was improving. But one industry in particular was hard hit. The reparation deliveries of German coal to France seriously affected the market of British coal exporters; for this and other causes the mines of South Wales and elsewhere were in great difficulties; and in the summer of 1925 the owners gave warning of an impending reduction of wages. The men answered this by threat of strike; and the Government, intervening in the public interest, was only able to avert this catastrophe by

the appointment of a Royal Commission of enquiry and the promise of a subsidy to maintain the old level of wages until the Commission's Report was complete. Next March the Report appeared. It ruled out any continuance of the subsidy as economically unsound. It enjoined on the owners certain reconstruction of their somewhat haphazard industry, and finally it demanded of the men a necessary reduction of wages. This last recommendation roused the fierce denunciation of the entire Labour world, which felt with justice that the miners' wages were already low enough. A General Strike was threatened; and despite the Government's persistent efforts, they were unable to effect a compromise. The owners declared themselves unable to pay the old wages; the men refused to accept a penny less. At the beginning of May the General Strike was called; and the Labour leaders confidently counted on bringing the Government swiftly to its knees. They had reckoned, however, without two things—the Government's careful organisation for the maintenance of supplies and the cool imperturbability of the British Public. Even in the great towns there was no serious rioting. Motor lorries, driven by volunteers, carried food supplies; a Government newspaper was printed and distributed likewise by volunteer labour; and within a few days an adequate train service was running. The grand coup had in fact failed; and with commendable sense the Labour leaders recognised the failure, and called off the strike at the end of nine days. The miners held on alone; and finally in autumn returned piecemeal to work on local agreements, often far less favourable than had been offered in spring. From the serious dislocation caused by the coal stoppage, British industry and trade took long to recover; but the General Strike itself had at least the one good effect of clearing the air. For years the country had suffered under the threat of its occurrence, uneasily ignorant of what the results might be. Now by calling Labour's bluff, the Government had once and for all laid the bogey, and had proved that the social stability of Britain was not to

be undermined by the agitations, however well organised, of a minority. A Bill, passed through Parliament in the following year declaring such general conspiracy to withhold labour to be in principle illegal; and, though the Socialists in Parliament blustered with indignation, it was clear that Labour, as a whole, had also learnt its lesson from the strike. A calmer and saner temper prevails. Agitators are less in evidence; and with the close of 1927 an invitation to confer with leading industrial magnates for the better organisation of national production has been accepted by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. The prospects of peace in industry have never been so bright since the century began.

When all things are considered, it seems that Mr. Baldwin's administration, though lacking perhaps in great constructive ability, has probably interpreted aright the country's chief need at the moment. It has aimed at governing with a firm hand, not as in Italy through the domination of a narrow political clique, but by methods of enlightened and even-handed justice. Throughout the spheres of foreign and imperial policy, the beneficial results are markedly to be seen. The dishonest intrigues of the Bolshevik Government of Russia have been wisely rewarded by a severance of diplomatic relations. The threatened destruction of British settlements in China, where the welter of civil war has already done grave injury to trade, has been averted by the timely dispatch of a defensive garrison. The demands of an inefficient Egyptian Government for the control of the Sudan have been successfully rebutted. The endless and dangerous quarrel between Ulster and the Irish Free State over the delimitation of their frontiers has been brought to an amicable settlement by a generous financial sacrifice on the part of the British Exchequer. In South Africa the national aspirations of a strong Dutch secessionist party have been watched with patient tolerance; and such patience has at least been rewarded in the recent decision whereby the factious agitation against the use of the British Flag has ended in a reasonable com-

promise. In India, despite endless discouragement and difficulty, the Government has been carried forward strongly along the lines of the "Dyarchical Constitution". Indian members of the administration have sometimes obstructed business, sometimes deliberately withdrawn their attendance and washed their hands of all responsibility; and now, when a Commission has been duly appointed to investigate the workings of the present system and pronounce upon the further extension of Indian self-government, many Indians threaten to boycott its enquiries. Nevertheless, if one thing is certain, it is that the Commission will proceed.

Last, but by no means least, at a time when the great Dominions are ceasing to lean upon the mother country and striking out on independent lines of their own, Great Britain is discovering and undertaking new and heavy responsibilities in other quarters. The vast tracts of tropical Africa which have come under her control either by right of occupation or, more recently, under mandate from the League of Nations, present problems of organisation and administration equal perhaps, if India be excepted, to any she has shouldered in the past. Millions of coloured peoples are now looking to British culture and British justice to bring them the benefits of civilisation, while excluding, if possible, its evils; and, as the deliberations of recent Colonial Conferences have shown, they will not be allowed to look in vain. The load is heavy for a country already burdened with numerous and critical problems of her own. But, though critics may croak of coming ruin, Great Britain has still within her vast reserves of vitality and strength. The mood of war weariness is passing; all classes are awaking to a fuller sense of the perils and the opportunities ahead of them; and the democratic basis of a society which, without refusing due honour to merit, admits of a continuous recruitment of strength from below to its upper ranks, is a sure guarantee against that staleness or degeneracy of fibre which has so often proved fatal to great empires of the past. He would be a rash prophet who at the outset of the year 1928 would assert that England's mission in the world is ended.

SUMMARIES

I. THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA (Sept. 1814-June 1815)

A. Measures to Check Spread of Revolution

- (i) "Legitimate," viz. hereditary, monarchies to be upheld: exiled rulers of France, Spain, Naples, and larger German principalities reinstated.
- (ii) Parliamentary institutions, which had been established during the war, abolished in Spain and Naples: but allowed in France and left to discretion of each ruler in German states.

B. Reconstruction of the Map

- (i) As a security against renewed French aggression, *Belgium* and *Holland* merged to form a buffer-state in North: *Genoa* and *Piedmont* in South. But France allowed to retain Alsace-Lorraine.
- (ii) Thirty-nine German states formed into Confederation under Austria's lead.
- (iii) Austria regains *Lombardy* and *Venice*: Prussia gains half *Saxony*, large *Rhineland* province, and (after quarrel with Russia) *Western Poland*.

C. The Concert of Europe

- (i) The Balance of Power being thus secured, all monarchs agree upon necessity of working together to counteract revolutionary movements.
- (ii) *Alexander* of Russia proposes well-meant, but fatuous "*Holy Alliance*," to which other powers give adhesion, but England, disliking foreign entanglements, declines.

D. Recrudescence and Suppression of Revolutionary Movements

- 1817 (i) In GERMANY, insubordination of students at the *Wartburg*, etc.
 - 1819 alarms *Metternich*, who, through *Carlsbad Decrees*, suppresses free expression of opinion throughout the Confederacy.
 - 1820 (ii) In ITALY, insurrection of "*Carbonari*" etc. against restored *Ferdinand I* of Naples suppressed by Austrian aid.
 - 1820 (iii) In SPAIN, restoration of despotic *Ferdinand* leads to democratic rising at Madrid. France intervenes to crush it.
 - 1822 BUT, as a protest, Duke of Wellington quits *Congress of Verona*, thus signaling England's break with the "Concert."
- Special subjects*: Growth of idea of Nationality: characters and aims of Metternich, Alexander, Castlereagh.

II. ENGLAND FROM 1815-1830 (1820, George III succeeded by his son and Regent, George IV)

A. Period of Tory Repression (1815-1822)

N.B.—*Castlereagh*, the moving spirit in Government, partially shares continental statesmen's fear of Revolution.

- 1815 (i) Corn prices kept up in landlords' interest by *Corn Laws*.
- (ii) Severe criminal code (223 capital crimes) ruthlessly enforced.
- 1817 (iii) Riots and machine-breaking (by "*Luddites*") : suspension of Habeas Corpus.
- 1819 (iv) Meeting in *St. Peter's Fields, Manchester*, dispersed with bloodshed.
- 1819 (v) "*Six Acts*" passed suppressing free speech, public meetings, etc.
- 1820 (vi) *Cato Street Conspiracy* (to avenge Peterloo) detected.

B. Period of Tory Enlightenment (1822-1827).

N.B.—On *Castlereagh's* suicide, *Canning* becomes Foreign Secretary under Lord Liverpool : under his influence more liberal attitude adopted.

I. In Home Politics :—

- (i) *Peel* reforms criminal code, reducing number of capital crimes.
- (ii) *Huskisson* (Tory Free Trader) relaxes antiquated *Navigation Laws* : modifies Corn Tax by introducing sliding-scale.

II. In Foreign Politics :—

- 1822 (i) By ordering Wellington to quit *Congress of Verona* (see above), Canning protests against French intervention in Spain, and thereby completes our breach with European reactionaries.
- 1823 (ii) Aided by *President Monroe's* famous declaration ("America for the Americans"), Canning prevents Spain from handing over her rebellious South American colonies to France.
- 1827 (iii) Despite his principle of "Non-Intervention," Canning is forced to intervene with Russia to save *Greece*, which, having revolted against Turks in 1821, is now overrun by Egyptian army of *Ibrahim Pasha*.
- 1827 (iv) Canning, after being six months Premier, dies just before our admiral, *Codrington*, sinks Turkish fleet at *Navarino*.
Aug. (Tsar finally compels Turks to liberate Greece in 1830.)

C. Period of Tory Relapse (1827-1830)

N.B.—*Wellington*, becoming Premier, excludes more enlightened ministers.

- (i) Wellington regrets sinking of Turk fleet : withdraws help from Greece.
- (ii) Renews repression of masses : institutes regular police force.
- (iii) Though *Daniel O'Connell* is twice elected in Ireland, Wellington upholds law excluding Catholics from Parliament ; until, fearing Irish rising, he yields and compels George IV to sign "*Catholic Emancipation Act*."

1829

BUT death of George IV leads to General Election ; and the Whigs, who, owing to loss of prestige during Napoleonic Wars, have been out for nearly thirty years, are returned to office.

Special subjects : Character and attitude of governing class : condition of the masses : character of Canning ; Greek War of Independence.

III. THE REFORM BILL (1831-1832)

N.B.—The growing bulk of MIDDLE CLASS manufacturers and merchants, who believed in *economic freedom* preached by *Adam Smith*, saw the cure for popular distress to lie in greater *political freedom*; and their views were largely reflected by the WHIGS, the old allies of the commercial interest.

A. The Need for Reform

- (i) Owing to corrupt practices of eighteenth century, the number of electors diminished, because men who possessed votes strove to confine the now valuable privilege to themselves.
- (ii) Power of electing an M.P. often got into hands of a few individuals, e.g. the Borough Corporation, a handful of tenants, or a big land-owner.
- (iii) While decayed boroughs of agricultural south-east still retained their M.P.'s, large new industrial towns of north-west were unrepresented.

B. The Passing of the Bill

First Phase.

- (i) Lord John Russell introduces Bill in Commons (March 1831).
- (ii) Fierce opposition of Tories: arguments of Peel, Inglis, etc.
- (iii) Second reading passed by 1 vote: but, after defeat in the discussion clause by clause, Lord Grey resigns (May 1831).

Second Phase.

- (i) At General Election Whigs returned with large majority.
- (ii) Bill passed through Commons despite Tory obstruction.
- (iii) Bill thrown out by Lords (October 1831).
- (iv) Grey brings up Bill again in revised form to give Peers a chance of repentance.
- (v) Lords again reject Bill: Grey resigns (May 1832).

Third Phase.

- (i) Wellington, fearing civil war, refuses office.
- (ii) Grey resumes office, the King promising to create, if necessary, enough new peers to swamp Tory opposition.
- (iii) Under this threat, Lords pass the Bill (June 1832).

C. Results of the Bill

- (i) Vote given (a) *in Towns* to all occupiers of property worth £10 a year; (b) *in Country* to all free-holders (and tenants at long lease) of property worth £10 a year and to all tenants at annual lease of property worth £50 a year.
- (ii) Redistribution of Seats (a) towns of under 2000 disfranchised; towns between 2000 and 4000 allowed one member only; (b) seats thus set free distributed among country districts and large towns.
- (iii) The £10 limit enfranchises Middle Class only, thus producing alliance between business world and aristocratic society.
- (iv) No immediate change in personnel of Commons: BUT, henceforth, Parliament becomes really dependent on will of electorate.
Special subject: Growth and attitude of Middle Classes.

IV. RULE OF THE WHIGS (Lord Grey, 1830-1837 : Melbourne, 1837-1841)

A. Foreign Politics

- (i) On death of William IV (1837), *Victoria* being forbidden by "Salic Law" to rule in Hanover, our territorial connection with Continent is ended.
- (ii) *Palmerston* (Foreign Secretary) supports downtrodden nationalities, and aims at co-operation with democratic France, which in 1830 ejects despotic *Charles X* and sets up *Louis Philippe* as "People's King."
- (iii) *Palmerston* assists *Belgium* to recover independence.
 - 1831 (a) Irritated by subjection to Holland, Belgium ejects Dutch garrison.
 - (b) *Louis Philippe*, eager to promote Belgian democracy, favours his son for Belgian throne.
 - 1832 (c) Though vetoing this proposal, *Palmerston* co-operates with France in establishing the Independence and (by Treaty of 1839) the "neutrality" of Belgium.
- (iv) In *Spain* *Palmerston* supports popular cause of young queen *Isabella* against her despotic uncle *Don Carlos* and allows British officers to fight for her.
 - 1834-39
- (v) In *Portugal* he supports young queen *Maria* against her despotic uncle *Don Miguel*, sending British squadron to defeat him.
 - 1831
- (vi) In *Near East*, fearing Russian expansion at expense of decaying Turkish Empire, *Palmerston* supports Turks.
 - 1840 (a) *Mehemet Ali*, Turkish Viceroy in Egypt, having revolted and overrun Palestine, our Fleet bombards *Acre* and crushes revolt.
 - (b) France, jealous of our influence in Levant, threatens war, but does nothing.

B. Home Politics

- (i) Abolishing *Poor Law* of 1601 and the pernicious system of granting doles to underpaid but able-bodied labourers, Whigs provide:—
 - 1834 (a) "Outdoor relief" for sick and aged only, (b) workhouses for able-bodied.
- (ii) To check selfishness and corruption of Mayors and Corporations, they establish system of local self-government and proper municipal elections.
 - 1835
- (iii) Following up prohibition of slave trade (brought about by *Wilberforce*, 1807), they compel liberation of slaves in our American colonies, paying compensation to owners.
 - 1834

N.B.—BUT legislation of Whigs (as representing Middle Classes) merely tends to confirm the position of Middle Classes (e.g. as administrators of Poor Law and local government) without really relieving distress of masses.

Special subject : Character of *Palmerston*.

V. THE WORKERS ORGANIZE

A. Rise of Working Class Reformers

- (i) Influence of French Revolution produces Socialist writers, e.g. *Tom Paine* (1737-1809) author of "Rights of Man."
- (ii) *Robert Owen* (1771-1858), rising to be owner of a Lanark factory,
 - introduces philanthropic and co-operative methods of management: wide influence of his experiments and writings.
- (iii) *Francis Place* urges on M.P.'s abolition of *Combination Law*: this ban on Trades Unions removed 1824, though by Act of 1825 they are forbidden to strike.

B. Chartist Movement

I. First Phase.

- (a) Opposition to New Poor Law and other unpopular measures, organized by *Feargus O'Connor* and other violent agitators.
- (b) But *London Working Men's Association*, led by *William Lovett*, wins the working class to a preference for constitutional methods.
- (c) They propose a further Reform of Parliament by the Six Points of their "*Charter*"; viz. universal suffrage; secret ballot; equalization of constituencies; annual parliaments; payment of members; abolition of property qualification for members.
- (d) While signatures are collected for monster "Petition," a "*Convention*" of People's Representatives meets, first in London, then in Birmingham, and, though Lovett's party is opposed to violence, threatens revolution if Petition is refused.
- 1839 (e) Commons refuse to hear Petition; but Chartists fail to act.
- (f) Government imprisons Lovett and O'Connor: Convention collapses.

II. Second Phase.

- 1842 (a) Chartism revived: new Petition organized, but talked down in Parliament by Macaulay and others.
- (b) O'Connor's violent methods undermine influence of Lovett.
- 1848 (c) Success of Continental Revolutions (see below) encourages Chartists to fresh action.
- (d) A third Petition carried to Commons; but, though troops and special constables ready, mob receives its rejection quietly.
- (e) Chartist agitation dies down; BUT most of their demands are granted in due course of time.

VI. PEEL AND THE CORN LAWS

A. The Free Trade Movement

- (i) Traditional system of heavy dues on imports (though partly relaxed by Huskisson) was strangling commerce.
- (ii) Free Traders of "*Manchester School*" argued that any loss of revenue entailed in reduction of such dues would be compensated by the increased receipts resulting from an increased volume of trade.
- 1841 (iii) On Whigs' fall, *Peel*, though *Tory* Premier, removes many import
- 1842 taxes : great benefit to trade, small loss to Exchequer.
- (iv) To make up for such initial loss, he adopts old war time expedient of an *Income Tax* ; which, finding the now prosperous merchants able to pay, he subsequently continues.

B. The Corn Laws' Repeal

- (i) These laws (passed 1815 as stimulus to agriculture) admitted no foreign grain, unless high price reached ; and then only on payment of heavy import tax (modified by Huskisson's sliding-scale).
- (ii) Though prosperous agriculture meant high rents for landlords and through absence of competition high prices for farmers, the poor suffered grievously from dearness of bread.
- (iii) Free Traders, led by *Cobden* and *Bright*, found the "*Anti-Corn Law League*" to procure repeal ; but *Peel* was unconvinced.
- 1838 (iv) Wet English harvest and Irish potato blight make famine certain
- 1845 unless foreign grain freely admitted.
- (v) Despite prophecy in "*Times*," *Peel* fails to convert Cabinet and resigns.
- (vi) Whigs failing to form ministry, *Peel* returns, and, despite opposition
- 1846 of many Tories led by *Lord George Bentinck* and *Disraeli*, he passes repeal of Corn Laws *with aid of Whigs*.

C. Peel and Ireland

- (i) *Daniel O'Connell*, working for Home Rule by peaceful methods, wields great influence.
- (ii) But his authority defied by disorderly "*Young Ireland*" enthusiasts ; and, while trying to check them, he is unjustly imprisoned by *Peel*.
- 1843 (iii) Famine of 1845 produces fresh disorder : *Peel* proposes "*Coercion Bill*" simultaneously with repeal of Corn Laws.
- (iv) Whigs abstain from voting against it till Corn Laws safely settled ;
- 1846 then join with *Disraeli* and Tories to throw *Peel* out.
- Result : The Tory or Conservative Party, being split into "*Pro-Peelites*" and "*Anti-Peelites*," is so weakened that it does not recover real power for twenty years.
- Special Subjects : Characters of *Peel*, *Cobden*, *Bright*, and *Disraeli*.

VII. THE MIDDLE YEARS

A. Great Britain Recovers Prosperity

- (i) From 1843 onwards Free Trade Reforms of Peel revitalize industry : export trade quadrupled in thirty years : import of grain ditto.
- (ii) Capitalists make large profits and undertake big enterprises, e.g. main railways laid during '40s : steamship services extended : telegraph installed.
- (iii) Great influx of population to towns : during '70s competition of cheap foreign corn causes decline of agriculture.
- (iv) Old power of landed aristocracy gradually undermined.

B. Renewal of Revolution in Europe

- * (i) SPAIN AND PORTUGAL (thanks partly to Palmerston's support) have both won parliamentary institutions.
- (ii) In ITALY, Austria still occupies *Lombardy* and wields strong influence over Pope, King of Naples, and small northern states.
 - (a) *Albert*, King of *Sardinia*, *Genoa*, and *Piedmont*, undertakes war of liberation ; but is defeated at *Novara*.
 - (b) Insurrection of *Mazzini* and *Garibaldi* in Papal States also fails.
- (iii) In FRANCE.
 - (a) " Citizen-king " *Louis Philippe* ejected : second Republic declared with *Louis Napoleon* as President.
 - (b) By coup d'état *Louis Napoleon* overthrows National Assembly ; and is confirmed in position by people's vote.
 - (c) *Napoleon* becomes *Emperor* and, though in theory representing public opinion, is led by ambition into reckless foreign policies.
- (iv) In GERMANY.
 - (a) Though Austria remains nominal head of Confederation, Prussia institutes a *Customs League*, which gives sort of unity to German States.
 - (b) On news of Revolution in Paris, German States rise and demand representative institutions.
 - (c) While *Hungarians* under *Kossuth* declare independence, Austrians also rise in *Vienna* : *Metternich* flees ; Emperor *Ferdinand* abdicates.
 - (d) Young *Francis Joseph*, who succeeds him, defeats Hungarian and crushes revolution in Austria.
 - (e) Conference of German representatives meets at *Frankfort* and, having framed a liberal constitution for a united Germany, offers crown to *Frederick William of Prussia*.
 - (f) *Frederick William* refuses offer ; *Frankfort Congress* dispersed : popular concessions largely withdrawn ; movement towards democracy checked.

Result : While most other States progress towards Liberty, Austria and Prussia revert to despotic government.

VIII. THE MID-VICTORIANS AND THEIR CRITICS

A. Industrial Reforms

- (i) *Anthony Ashley Cooper, Lord Shaftesbury* (1801-1885), believing in Tory doctrine of Government control over industry, initiates legislation for protection of workers.
- 1833 (ii) He obtains 9 hour day for children under 11 and 12 hour day for young persons between 11 and 19.
- 1842 (iii) On Report of Commission of Enquiry, he obtains prohibition of employment of girls and women in coal-pits.
- 1847 (iv) A bill for 8 hour day for children passed by Whigs on his initiative, though he has lost his seat in the House.

B. Education of Public Opinion

- (i) *Charles Dickens* (1812-1870), learning from experience miseries of slums, Debtors' Prison, etc., exposes them in his novels.
- (ii) *Thomas Carlyle* (1795-1881) denounces hypocrisy of age, extolling merits of Cromwell, etc. ("Heroes and Hero-worship"), Mirabeau, etc. ("French Revolution"), and even Frederick the Great ("History").
- (iii) *John Ruskin* (1819-1900) attacks industrial developments of age,
 - (a) by demanding "moral code" in commerce, as opposed to "ruthless competition" theory of Manchester School ("Unto this Last");
 - (b) by upholding ideals of artistic beauty, as against ugliness of mechanical invention (thus influencing the "Pre-Raphaelite" painters Rossetti, Holman Hunt, Millais).

C. Religious Revival

- (i) *Keble, Pusey, Newman*, and other young Oxford men declare Reformation to have cut England off from true stream of Christian development.
- 1833 (ii) Their views published in a series of "Tracts for the Times."
- 1845 (iii) Newman joins Roman Church; soon followed by *Manning*.
- 1850 (iv) Public alarm at Pope's action in establishing territorial Sees for Roman Catholic bishops in England.
- (v) Alarm quieted by moderation of most followers of Oxford movement, who remain loyal to Protestant Church.
- (vi) Their zeal does much to stimulate religion, e.g. restoration of churches, missionary societies.

D. Darwin's Influence

- 1831 (i) *Charles Darwin* (1809-1882), visiting South Seas on *H.M.S. Beagle*, gleans inkling of "evolution" by "natural selection."
- 1859 (ii) Publishes his theory in "Origin of Species."
- 1871 (iii) Applies same idea to human evolution in "Descent of Man."
- (iv) His theory, further expounded by *Huxley* and *Herbert Spencer*, upsets men's ideas about religion and the Bible.
- (v) Materialistic view of life results from their influence.

IX. PALMERSTON AND CRIMEAN WAR

- N.B.*—(i) Whigs under *Russell* (1846-52) fall after Palmerston's dismissal.
 (ii) Brief ministry of anti-Peelite Tories under *Lord Derby*, 1852.
 (iii) Coalition of Whigs and Peelite Tories under *Lord Aberdeen*; *Russell* Foreign Minister, *Palmerston* Home Secretary, 1853.

A. Russia and Turkey

- (i) Tsar *Nicholas* tries to hasten dissolution of Turkish Empire, which we support as bulwark between India and Russian aggression.
 1853 (ii) Tsar supports Greek Church against Roman about *Palestine shrines*; and through *Menschikoff* claims protectorship over Turks' Christian subjects.
 (iii) Backed by our envoy, *Stratford de Redcliffe*, Sultan rejects this claim.
 (iv) *Louis Napoleon* urges unwilling *Aberdeen* to support Turks: *Palmerston* resigns.
 Nov. (v) Russians precipitate war by sinking Turkish fleet off *Sinope*.

B. Crimean War

I. The Landing.

- 1854 (i) Turks drive back Russians across Danube (June).
 Sep. (ii) 50,000 French (*Arnaud*) and British (*Raglan*) and Turkish troops land on west of Crimean peninsula.
 (iii) We defeat Russians on *Alma*, but fail to press pursuit.
 (iv) *Menschikoff* withdraws main Russian Army N.E. from *Sebastopol*.
II. Siege of Sebastopol. *N.B.*—Invested only upon south.

- 1st Phase (a) *Menschikoff* swoops towards *Balaclava* harbour on our right rear.
 Oct. (b) *Heavy Brigade* checks Russians; but, after futile charge of *Light Brigade*, they remain menacing our right.
 Nov. (c) *Menschikoff* and town garrison attack us near *Mt. Inkerman*; but fail.
 2nd Phase (a) During severe winter terrible losses from sickness.
 (b) Medical arrangements at *Scutari* reorganized by *Florence Nightingale*.
 (c) *Palmerston*, succeeding incompetent *Aberdeen*, improves military organization.
 3rd Phase (a) In Spring Allies reinforced (up to 200,000) from home and Sardinia. (b) June, assault, planned by *Pélissier* and *Raglan*, fails; *Raglan* dies. (c) Sept., French capture *Malakoff* redoubt; and, though British fail at *Redan*, Russians evacuate *Sebastopol*.

III. The Settlement.

Tsar *Nicholas* dies: *Alexander II* makes terms (a) dismantling of *Sebastopol*; (b) withdrawal of Russian fleet from Black Sea.
 [*N.B.*—In 1875 Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, and Rumania revolt with Russian aid; and, though our fleet sent to Constantinople, Turks forced to liberate them.]

C. Palmerston's Ministry, 1855-65

- (i) Thrown out for fourteen months in 1858 owing to *Orsini Plot*.
 (ii) Strong foreign policy (a) expedition v. Afghanistan, 1856; (b) war against Chinese, 1857; (c) forces will on European statesmen.
 (iii) Gives nation sense of a mission in the world; but sees no need for reform at home.
Special Subjects: Condition of Army; *Palmerston's Character*.

X. INDIA AND THE MUTINY

A. Our Frontiers

I. Against the Russian Menace we employ *Afghanistan* as buffer.

- 1837 (i) First Occupation.
 - (a) Expedition to *Kabul*: new Ameer set up.
- 1841 (b) Revolt of tribesmen: annihilation of retreating garrison.
- (c) Punitive expedition and subsequent withdrawal.
- 1879 (ii) Second occupation.
 - (a) Russian intrigues necessitate intervention.
- 1880 (b) Second rising; garrison cut off in *Kandahar*, saved by Roberts's march from *Kabul*.
- (c) We again withdraw, leaving friendly Ameer.
- (iii) Ameer remains loyal: agreement with Russia, 1907.

II. Occupation of India.

- (i) *Mahrattas* finally broken by *Lord Hastings*, 1818.
- (ii) *Sikhs of Punjab* conquered in two wars (1846 and 1849).
- (iii) We annex *Scinde* (1845), *Oude* (1856), *Lower Burmah* (1852).

B. Westernising Policy

- 1836 (i) *Macaulay's* scheme of educating natives in English.
- 1848 (ii) *Lord Dalhousie* suppresses barbarous customs, admits natives to minor posts, installs railways, telegraphs, etc.
- 56 (iii) Dislike of this and violation of caste (cartridges, etc.) breeds mutiny.

C. The Mutiny, 1857-58

[N.B. —Garrison drops to under 50,000 during Crimean War; but only sepoys in North disaffected.]

I. The Critical Months.

- (i) Outbreak at *Meerut*: mutineers occupy *Delhi* and crown descendant of Mogul Emperors.
- May (ii) *Cawnpore* garrison (*Wheeler*) besieged: lured out by *Nana Sahib*.
- June (iii) *Lucknow* garrison (*Henry Lawrence*, then *Inglis*) holds out until
- Sept. *Havelock* and *Outram* reinforce it.

II. Turn of Tide.

- (i) *Colin Campbell* arrives (Nov.): relieves and evacuates *Lucknow*.
- (ii) *John Lawrence*, Governor of *Punjab*, sends troops to recover *Delhi*.
 - (a) The Ridge occupied and held (June-Aug.); (b) on arrival of *John Nicholson* town carried by assault.
- (iii) With fresh troops from home *Campbell* recovers *Lucknow* and by series of "drives" stamps out mutiny.

1858

III. Pacification.

Though punishing barbarities severely, *Lord Canning* merciful: Royal Proclamation promises justice and religious liberty.

D. Government of India

- 1858 (i) Transferred from East India Company wholly to Parliament.
 - 1909 (ii) *Lord Morley* (Sec. of State) and *Lord Minto* (Viceroy) admit natives to Councils of Secretary of State, Viceroy, and Provincial Governors.
 - 1919 (iii) *E. S. Montagu* (Sec. of State) and *Lord Chelmsford* (Viceroy) entrust native element in councils with real responsibility in minor matters.
- Special Subject*: Races and religions of natives; Administrative and legislative machinery.

XI. PROGRESS AND REACTION ABROAD

A. American Civil War (1861-65)

- (i) Southern "Plantation" States had retained slaves: protest in Northern States begun by *William Garrison* (1831).
- 1860* (ii) *Abraham Lincoln* becoming President, southerners fear abolition of slavery and force on war by threatening to secede.
- (ij) The war.
 - (a) Though North isolate southerners by capture of *Mississippi valley*, they fail under M'Clellan to capture *Richmond* and are invaded in turn by *Lee*.
 - 1862 (b) Having defeated *Lee* at *Gettysburg*, Grant reduces *Richmond* by ten months of siege warfare: capitulation of south.
 - 1863 (v) The war produces friction between northerners and England:
 - (a) over capture of southern envoys on British ship *Trent*;
 - 1865 (b) over equipment at Liverpool of the *Alabama* for southerners' use: £3,000,000 fine exacted from us after years of arbitration.

B. War of Italian Liberation

- (i) *Victor Emmanuel II* of Sardinia-Piedmont and his Minister *Cavour* earn French gratitude by assisting in Crimea.
- 1855 (ii) With aid of Louis Napoleon they beat Austrians at *Magenta* and *Solferino*: and recover LOMBARDY and other Northern States.
- 1859 (iii) *Garibaldi* and 1000 volunteers, taking *Palermo*, recover Sicily: and, landing near Naples, liberate SOUTH and CENTRAL ITALY.
- 1860 (iv) Prussia, having beaten Austria (see below), rewards *Victor Emmanuel's* neutrality by cession of VENICE.
- 1866 (v) On fall of Louis Napoleon, the Pope's champion, ROME is ceded
- 1871 and becomes capital: only Tyrol and Trieste "unredeemed."

C. Rise of Germany

- 1852 (i) *Frederick William* curtails powers of unrepresentative Prussian Parliament.
- 1861 (ii) *William I* on accession triumphs over Parliament and, aided by *Bismarck* and *von Roon*, strengthens Prussian Army.
- (iii) *Bismarck* challenges AUSTRIA'S supremacy.
- 1864 (a) Co-operates with her in wresting *Schleswig-Holstein* from Denmark.
- 1866 (b) Provokes her to war over settlement: defeats her at *Sadowa*.
- (c) Persuades northern German States to unite under Prussia.
- (iv) *Bismarck* challenges FRANCE.
- 1870 (a) Quarrel over Spanish succession: Louis Napoleon's envoy *Benedetti* "insults" *William I* at *Ems*.
- (b) Army of all German States under *von Moltke* invades France.
 - 1. *Macmahon* defeated at *Wörth*: retreats to *Chalons*.
 - Aug. 2. *Bazaine* caught at *Gravelotte*: forced back on *Metz* and besieged.
 - 3. *Macmahon*, moving north-west to relieve *Metz*, surrounded at *Sedan*.
- Oct. (c) *Metz* and *Strasbourg* reduced: after declaration of Republic (under *Gambetta* and *Favre*) and four months' siege, Paris surrenders.
- (d) France loses Alsace-Lorraine: pays £200,000,000.
- (v) All German States accept *William* of Prussia as EMPEROR.

XII. CONSERVATIVES AND LIBERALS

- I. *Conservative Ministry, June, 1866-November, 1868. Lord Derby, Premier; Disraeli, Chancellor of Exchequer, and in 1868 Premier.*
 - 1867 (i) *New Reform Bill* passed, giving vote to working-men, (all town householders: £12 holders in country districts).
 - 1868 (ii) Though counting off "conservatism" of working-men, Disraeli defeated at General Election.
- II. *Liberal Ministry, December, 1868-January, 1874. Gladstone, Premier.*
 - (i) Despite policy of low taxation and State economy, Gladstone is forced to increase Army on *Cardwell's* short service scheme.
 - 1872 (ii) *Secret Ballot* introduced in Parliamentary elections.
 - 1870 (iii) *Education Act* introduced (*Forster*): public elementary schools established (but not compulsory till 1876: free of charge in 1891).
 - (iv) Religious teaching to be "undenominational"; but favouritism to Church schools annoys Dissenters, causing defeat of Gladstone in election of 1874.
- III. *Conservative Ministry, February, 1874-June, 1880. Disraeli, Premier.*
 - (i) Home policy: State control in industry, etc.
 - (a) With aid of *Stafford Northcote* and *Cross*, "*Housing Bill*" passed empowering local authorities to rebuild slums.
 - (b) Regulation of working conditions laid down in "*Factory Act*."
 - 1876 (c) Right to strike (withheld by Act of 1825) given to Trades Unions, provided they commit no act illegal for an individual.
 - (ii) Foreign Policy: Imperialism and "strong" diplomacy.
 - (a) Queen made "Empress of India": second occupation of *Afghanistan*, 1879.
 - 1875 (b) Khedive's shares in *Suez Canal* (hitherto mainly French concern) bought with aid of *Baron Rothschild*.
 - 1878 (c) Despite Gladstone's denunciations of Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria, Disraeli supports Turks against rebel Balkan States, though only so far as to send fleet to protect Constantinople: at *Congress of Berlin* resists extravagant Russian claims.
- IV. *Liberal Ministry, 1880-July, 1886. Gladstone, Premier.*
 - (i) At home extends franchise to all householders in country.
 - (ii) In EGYPT.
 - (a) *Capt. Baring* (*Lord Cromer*) having been sent in 1879 to reorganize Khedive's finances, we are forced to intervene to crush insurrection of *Arabi Bey*.
 - 1881 (b) *Alexandria* bombarded: rebels defeated by *Wolseley* at *Tel-el-Kebir*: temporary occupation of Egypt decided on.
 - (c) *Mahdi* rises in Sudan: Egyptian troops driven into *Khartoum*.
 - 1884 (d) *Gordon* sent to organize evacuation of *Khartoum*: but, against Spring *Cromer's* orders, holds on and is besieged.
 - 1885 (e) Gladstone persuaded to send *Wolseley* to rescue *Gordon*: but Jan. he arrives too late.
 - (iii) In IRELAND.
 - (a) Previous history: Famine of 1847 had led to
 - (1) Recrudescence of "Young Ireland" movement: futile rising of *Smith O'Brien*, 1848.
 - (2) Emigration to America, whence *Fenians* plot outrage in England and Ireland.

- (b) Gladstone and Ireland. While passing "*Coercion Act*" in 1868, Gladstone planned to redress grievances by (1) disestablishing Protestant Church in Ireland; (2) enforcing proper treatment of tenants on new class of "absentee" landlords arisen since 1869 Famine; (3) fixing rents at a fair price.
- (c) Parnell determines to fight for Home Rule by constitutional methods, although the "*Land League*" he starts leads to violence and his own arrest: and murder of Lord F. Cavendish in 1880 Phoenix Park partly discredits him.
- (d) Parnell's Irish party helps to overthrow Gladstone's Ministry.
- (e) On return to power Gladstone convinced that Home Rule must be granted.
- (f) Secession of many Liberals causes defeat of Bill and fall of Gladstone.
- (g) Though clearing himself of Pigott's forged charge of approving Phoenix Park Murders, Parnell is discredited by divorce suit.

V. *Conservative (Unionist) Ministry, August, 1886-July, 1892. Lord Salisbury, Premier.*

- 1891 (i) Balfour restores Irish prosperity by policy of lending tenants money for purchase of their farms.
- (ii) County Councils created: elementary education made free of charge (1891).

VI. *Liberal Ministry, Gladstone, 1892-March, 1894; Lord Rosebery, 1894-June, 1895.*

- 1894 *Second Home Rule Bill* passed through Commons, but decisively rejected by Lords.

VII. *Unionist Ministry, June, 1895-1905. Lord Salisbury, Premier.*

- (i) In EGYPT.
- (a) While Cromer builds up Egypt, Sudan still disturbed by Mahdi.
- (b) Kitchener defeats Mahdi at Omdurman and occupies Sudan.
- (c) French claim to Sudan (made by Col. Marchand at Fashoda) rejected.
- (ii) BOER WAR, 1899-1902 (see below).
- (iii) While failing to formulate true Imperial Constitution, Chamberlain proposes *Tariff Reform* to create bond between Colonies and England.
- (iv) Public reaction against exaggerated Imperialism; hence rejection of Unionists at election of January, 1906.

Special subjects: Character of Party Politics; influence of Press; principle of State Compulsion; characters of Disraeli and Gladstone; Gordon; Irish religious problems; Fenianism; Parnell.

XIII. THE EMPIRE

A. Crown Colonies (Mostly for Purposes of Trade)

[N.B.—Effects of (a) Industrial Revolution; (b) Suppression of slavery in West Indies; (c) Suez Canal, tend to develop Oriental trade.]

- (i) *Malay Peninsula*.
 - (a) *Penang*, 1800.
 - (b) *Singapore*, 1819.
 - (c) Control extended to islands and mainland States; *North Borneo*, 1881; *Sarawak* (Rajah Brooke's creation), 1888.
- (ii) *Chinese Stations*.
 - (a) East India Company's monopoly ended, 1833.
 - (b) Chinese destroy opium stores, 1839; war leads to opening of Chinese ports and cession of *Hong-Kong*, 1841.
 - (c) Second war, 1856-60; sack of Summer Palace, *Pekin*; resistance to our penetration ends.
 - (d) Cession of *Wei-hai-Wei*, 1898.
- (iii) *Pacific Islands*.
 - (a) Trade and missionaries breed native unrest.
 - (b) Murder of *Bishop Patteson* leads to annexation of *Fiji* and other isles, 1874.
- (iv) *Falkland Islands*: annexed 1833, give us useful naval base.
- (v) *Central Africa*.
 - (a) *Sierra Leone* settlement for freed slaves, 1787; Crown Colony, 1808.
 - (b) *Gold Coast* transferred from Company to Crown, 1821.
 - (c) *Southern Nigeria* ditto, 1899; *Ashanti* suppressed, 1873.
 - (d) *Livingstone* and *Stanley* explore the interior.
 - (e) Threatened by German competition, we claim *Uganda*, 1888; *British East Africa* and *Zanzibar*, 1890.

B. The Dominions (Founded through Emigration)

- I. CANADA. (i) *Growth of population*: (a) After Declaration of Independence of U.S.A. (1783), many New Englanders cross into "*Upper Canada*" (*Ontario*); (b) Canadians repel United States attack, 1812-15; (c) emigration swelled by bad conditions in England after 1815; (d) *Vancouver Island* (discovered, 1792) and *British Columbia* opened up by Canadian traders, 1821; (e) Canadian Pacific Railway (1885) facilitates trade.
- (ii) *Political development*: (a) Colony divided into Upper and Lower Canada, with separate constitutions under British governor, 1791; (b) discontent of democrats in Upper Canada and of French in Lower Canada leads to feeble rising, 1837; (c) *Lord Durham* sent out: unites two provinces under Liberal Constitution, 1842; (d) *Lord Elgin* inaugurates truly representative Cabinet, 1847; (e) *Sir F. Macdonald* achieves *Federation* of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, British Columbia, and Manitoba (taken over from Hudson Bay Company, 1870); but not Newfoundland.
- II. AUSTRALIA. (i) *Growth of population*: (a) East coast explored by Captain Cook, 1770; (b) convicts first sent to *Botany Bay*, 1788: leads to settlements at *Sydney*, *Brisbane*, and in *Tasmania*; (c) emigration of non-convicts increases, stimulated by gold finds (1851) and sheep-farming, etc.
- (ii) *Political development*: (a) From New South Wales are formed the States of *Victoria* (cap. *Melbourne*) and *Queensland* (cap. *Brisbane*),

which separate during '50s; (b) new emigrants settle in *West Australia*; (c) *South Australia* and *New Zealand* founded by enterprise of *Gibbon Wakefield*; (d) Federation of Australian States, but not *New Zealand*, 1900.

III. SOUTH AFRICA,

- (i) *Relations with Boers.*
 - (a) Dutch form trade station for *Incla* at Cape, 1652.
 - (b) Seizing Cape during Napoleonic Wars, we keep it, 1815.
 - (c) Our liberation of slaves (1833) annoys Dutch settlers, who migrate across *Orange* and *Vaal Rivers* ("Great Trek").
 - 1836 (d) We grant freedom to Boers of *Orange Free State* and *Transvaal*.
 - 1852-54 (e) Alarmed by their quarrels with native tribes, we reassume control of Boers.
 - 1876 (f) This step provokes *Zulus* to war; crushed after dealing us severe blows at *Rorke's Drift* and *Isandhlwana*.
 - 1879 (g) Boers declare war; and, having overwhelmed *Sir G. Colley* at *Majuba*, are granted independence by Gladstone.
 - 1881 (h) *President Kruger* works to make South Africa "all Dutch."
- (ii) *British Expansion.*
 - (a) *Cape Colony* becomes self-governing, 1872: *Kaffirs* gradually submit: *Natal* colonized.
 - (b) *Cecil Rhodes*, having made fortune in *Kimberley* diamond mines, enters politics, 1880; and forms schemes of expansion.
 - (c) *Rhodes* persuades *Bechuana* chiefs to accept our "protection," 1883.
 - (d) Extorts trade concessions from *Matabele* chief *Lobengula*; entering *Mashonaland* and *Matabeleland*, we found *Rhodesia*.
 - 1890 (e) As Premier of the Cape, *Rhodes* tries in vain to conciliate Boers

C. South African War

- (i) British settlers round *Johannesburg* ("Uitlanders") oppressed by Boer Government.
 - 1895 (ii) Rising planned by Uitlanders: *Jamson's Raid* miscarries.
 - (iii) *Kruger* makes secret military preparations: negotiations of *Chamberlain* and *Milner* fail to avert war.
 - (iv) WAR. *First Phase*: Boer offensives in three theatres inflict three reverses.
 - 1899 (a) *Mafeking* and *Kimberley* besieged in West: *Methuen's* relief force cut up at *Magersfontein*.
 - Dec. (b) Cape Colony invaded in south: *Gatacre* routed in night battle.
 - (c) *Natal* invaded and *Sir G. White* besieged at *Ladysmith*: *Buller's* relief force repulsed at *Tugela River*.
 - (v) WAR. *Second Phase*: *Roberts* and *Kitchener* arrive with reinforcements.
 - 1900 (a) By outflanking march, *Roberts* drives *Cronje* from *Kimberley*; and surrounds him at *Paardeberg*.
 - Feb. (b) *Buller* reaches *Ladysmith*: Boer resistance collapses.
 - (c) Having entered *Bloemfontein* (March) and *Pretoria* (June), *Roberts* leaves *Kitchener* to finish war.
 - (d) Guerilla bands under *de Wet*, etc., rounded up at last by block-house system; final surrender June, 1902.
 - 1906 (e) Self-government granted to *Transvaal* and *Free State*.
 - 1910 (f) Federation with Cape Colony and *Natal*.
- Special subjects*: Problems of an Imperial Constitution; Tariff Reform.

XIV. THE RISE OF LABOUR

Liberal Government, 1906-16. Campbell-Bannerman, 1906-08. Asquith, 1908-16.

[N.B.—Much influenced by Socialistic Labour party, numbering fifty members.]

A. Liberal Legislation (Extending Principle of State Control)

- (i) State provision available in theory for all citizens equally:—
 - 1907 (a) *Free meals and medical inspection* of school children.
 - 1909 (b) *Labour Bureaux* for information about employment.
- (ii) State provision confined to poorer classes only:—
 - 1908 (a) *Old Age Pensions* for poor folk over seventy.
 - 1911 (b) *Insurance Act* compelling employers and employed to contribute towards medical attendance of latter.
- (iii) *Lloyd George's* scheme of *Land Taxation* (1909-11) to be levied on:—
 - (a) "Unearned increment" on sale of town sites.
 - (b) Rich owners of "undeveloped land."
- (iv) *Parliament Act* limiting House of Lords' Veto.
 - (a) Liberals vexed by Lords' rejection of their Bills, e.g. *Licensing Bill, 1908*.
 - (b) *Liberal Budget* (1909) rejected by Lords on score of Land Tax clauses.
 - (c) Liberals' appeal to country: on return to power, pass Bill limiting Lords' veto to two years.
 - 1910 (d) Lords refuse to pass it: Liberals again appeal by General Election.
 - (e) Liberals again in majority with aid of Irish and Labour parties.
 - (f) Threatened with creation of new Peers, Lords pass the Bill.

B. Labour Agitation

- (i) Despite success of Labour candidates at election of 1906, results of "constitutional action" are discouraging: hence a growing tendency to "industrial action," i.e. strikes.
- (ii) Improved efficiency of Trade Unions by amalgamation and increased membership.
- 1911 (iii) *Railwaymen strike* to force Directors to "recognize" their leaders.
- 1912 (iv) Great industrial unrest: 800 strikes: "Triple Alliance" planned.

C. Liberal Government's Troubles

- (i) *Female Suffrage Movement*.
 - (a) Violent tactics of "suffragettes."
 - (b) Government embarrassed by hunger strike of those imprisoned.
 - (c) Agitation ceases on outbreak of war.
 - (d) Vote given to women over thirty (1917).
- (ii) IRELAND.
 - (a) As reward for Irish support over Parliament Act, Liberals introduce Home Rule Bill, viz. Dublin Parliament to control Irish affairs: but British Parliament (still containing Irish members) to control defence, etc.
 - (b) Ulstermen, led by Sir E. Carson, prepare to resist Nationalist (Catholic) Parliament.
 - (c) Nationalists raise volunteer corps to oppose Ulster.
 - 1914 (d) Government resolves to disarm both sets of volunteers.
 - Summer (e) Officers at *Curragh Camp* refuse orders to march on Ulster; but crisis lost sight of at outbreak of war.
 - (f) Though Home Rule Bill passed, its execution indefinitely postponed.

Special subjects: Theories of Socialists and Syndicalists; Trade Unions; Mr. Lloyd George.

XV. EUROPE FROM 1870-1914

A. Germany since 1870

- (i) Bismarck succeeds in isolating France :
 - (a) by friendly understanding with Russia ;
 - (b) by *Triple Alliance* with Austria and Italy.
- 1882 (ii) On deaths of William I and his successor Frederick, William II succeeds to throne and dismisses Bismarck.
- (iii) Germany aims at Colonial Empire in *Africa* :—
 - (a) *German S.W. Africa* occupied, 1883, *Togoland*, 1884, *German E. Africa*, 1890.
 - 1905 (b) Kaiser protests against French protectorate of *Morocco*, which, however, is upheld by Powers at *Algeiras Conference*.
 - 1911 (c) Protest repeated by sending of German gunboat to *Agadir* : war barely averted.
- (iv) Germany aims at influence in *Middle East* :—
 - (a) Kaiser befriends Turkey : visits Sultan, 1878, Palestine, 1898.
 - (b) Germans construct railway from *Constantinople to Bagdad*.
 - (c) Austria encouraged to dominate Balkans : understanding with *Ferdinand of Bulgaria* : annexation of *Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 1908.

B. Preparations for War

- (i) Kaiser builds up German Navy : *Heligoland* fortified : *Kiel Canal* dug.
- (ii) Despite our pacific policy, " militarism " grows in Germany.
- (iii) "*Triple Entente*" formed against German aggression.
 - (a) Alliance of France-Russia, 1895 ; (b) Franco-British Entente arranged by Edward VII, 1904.
- (iv) After *Agadir* crisis, France adopts " 3 year service " for conscripts : German Army increased : extreme tension.

C. Outbreak of War

- (i) Serbia bitter over annexation of *Bosnia-Herzegovina*.
- 1914 (ii) *Archduke Francis Ferdinand* being murdered at *Serajevo* (June 28), Austria accuses Serbian Government of complicity and presents ultimatum (July 23).
- (iii) Despite Serbia's concessions, Austria declares war (July 25).
- (iv) At Serbs' appeal for help Russia mobilizes.
- (v) Germany, while protesting pacific intentions, urges on Austria.
- (vi) Germans demand passage through Belgium.
- (vii) Sir E. Grey, having hitherto striven for peace, declares we must stand by our pledge of 1839 to preserve Belgian neutrality.
- (viii) War declared between Britain and Germany, 4 August.

XVI. CHIEF EVENTS OF THE GREAT WAR, 4 AUGUST, 1914, TO 11 NOVEMBER, 1918

	WESTERN FRONT.	EASTERN FRONT.	NAVAL WAR.
1914	<p><i>Liège</i> taken, 7 Aug. : Retreat from <i>Mons</i> begins 23 Aug.</p> <p>Battle of <i>Marne</i>, Sep. 9-9 : G. retirement.</p> <p>G. stand on <i>Aisne</i>, Sep. 15 : Line stabilized.</p> <p><i>Antwerp</i> falls, 7 Oct. : Line extended to coast.</p> <p>First Battle of <i>Ypres</i>, 21 Oct.-11 Nov. : B. line holds.</p>	<p>R. invade <i>E. Prussia</i> : cut up at <i>Tannenberg</i>, 31 Aug.</p> <p>R. invade <i>Galicia</i>, Aug. : invest <i>Przemysl</i>, Sep.</p> <p>R. threaten <i>Silesia</i> : but driven back off Warsaw.</p> <p>R. occupy <i>Carpathian passes</i> into Hungary, Dec.</p>	<p>B. raid on Heligoland Bight, Aug.</p> <p><i>von Spee</i> sinks <i>Craddock</i> off Chile, 1 Nov.</p> <p><i>Sturdee</i> sinks <i>von Spee</i> at Falklands, 8 Dec.</p> <p>G. cruisers bombard <i>Whitby</i>, etc., Dec.</p> <p>B. raid on <i>Cuxhaven</i>, Dec.</p>
1915	<p>B. offensive at <i>Neuve Chapelle</i>, Mar.</p> <p>G. gas attack N. of <i>Ypres</i>, Apr.</p> <p>F. offensive near <i>Lens</i>, May.</p> <p>F. offensive in <i>Champagne</i> and B. near <i>Loos</i>, Sep.</p>	<p>G. reorganize and stiffen Austr. Army.</p> <p><i>Mackensen</i> breaks through R. on <i>Donajza</i>, May.</p> <p>R. retreat : Warsaw lost (Aug.) and Poland.</p> <p>R. frontier crossed : but G. checked, Oct.</p>	<p><i>Beatty</i> pursues cruiser raiders off <i>Dogger Bank</i>, Jan.</p> <p>Tentative blockade of neutral trade with G.</p> <p>G. U-Boats active in Mediterranean.</p>
1916	<p>G. offensive against <i>Verdun</i>, Feb.-Jun.</p> <p>B. and F. offensive on <i>Somme</i>, July-Oct.</p> <p><i>Bapaume</i>, the objective, not reached.</p> <p>[<i>Falkenhayn</i> superseded by <i>Hindenburg</i> and <i>Ludendorff</i>].</p>	<p><i>Brusiloff</i> routs Austr. in <i>Galicia</i>, May.</p> <p><i>Rumania</i> comes in : invades <i>Transylvania</i>, Aug.</p> <p><i>Rumania</i> overrun : <i>Buckarest</i> lost, Dec.</p>	<p>Unrestricted U-Boat warfare threatened, spring.</p> <p>But postponed through protest of U.S.A.</p> <p><i>Jellicoe</i> and <i>Beatty</i> defeat <i>von Scheer</i> off <i>Jutland</i>, 31 May.</p>
1917	<p>G. retire to <i>Hindenburg Line</i>, Feb.</p> <p>B. take <i>Vimy Ridge</i> : but <i>Nivelle</i> (successor to Joffre) fails in grand offensive on <i>Aisne</i>, Apr.</p> <p>B. take <i>Massines</i>, Jun. : work towards <i>Passchendaele</i>, Aug.-Oct.</p> <p>B. surprise attack at <i>Cambrai</i> : G. troops moved from Russian front retake ground.</p>	<p>Revolution at <i>Petrograd</i>, Mar. : Duma govt.</p> <p>Brussiloff attacks in S. : temporary success, Jul.</p> <p><i>Kerensky</i> in power, Sep. : discipline sapped.</p> <p><i>Bolsheviks</i>, <i>Lenin</i> and <i>Trotsky</i> in power, Nov.</p> <p>Peace parleys begun with Germany.</p>	<p>Unrestricted U-Boat warfare begun, Feb.</p> <p>U.S.A. declares war on G., Apr.</p> <p>6,000,000 tons shipping lost in year.</p> <p>But B. fleet gradually masters the situation.</p>
1918	<p>G. break through (a) towards <i>Amiens</i>, 21 Mar. ; (b) towards <i>Calais</i>, Apr. ; (c) towards <i>Marne</i>, May.</p> <p>G. renew attack E. and W. of Rheims, 15 July.</p> <p><i>Foch</i> counter-attacks near <i>Villers Cotterets</i>, 18 July.</p> <p>Combined advance of B., F., Belgians, and Americans, Aug.-7 Nov.</p> <p>Kaiser abdicates : Socialist Govt. accepts <i>Armistice</i>, 11 Nov.</p>	<p>Bolsheviks sign peace with Germany at <i>Brest-Litovsk</i>, Mar.</p>	<p><i>Keys</i> blocks U-Boat exit at <i>Zeebrugge</i>, 23 Apr.</p> <p><i>Ostend</i> blocked, 10 May.</p> <p>G. Fleet surrendered, 21 Nov.</p>

ITALIAN FRONT.	BALKAN FRONT.	TURKISH FRONTS.
<p>1914 Italy repudiates her alliance with Austria and Germany.</p>	<p>Serbia repels Austr. invasions, Aug. and Dec.</p>	<p>G. cruisers shelter at Constantinople, Aug. Turkey declares for the enemy, Nov. B. occupy <i>Basra</i> at mouth of Tigris, Dec.</p>
<p>1918 Italy, on Allies' pledge to give her Dalmatia, declares war on Austria, May. I. undertakes campaigns (a) to recover <i>Trentino</i>, (b) to capture <i>Trieste</i>. I. win lower reaches of R. <i>Isonzo</i>, Aug.</p>	<p>Bulgaria joins Austr., July. Combined attack of Bulg. and Austr. Serb. Army retreats into Albania, Sep. to Dec. Allied troops landed at <i>Salonica</i>, Oct.</p>	<p>T. attack on <i>Suez Canal</i> repulsed, Feb. B. fleet attempts passage of <i>Dardanelles</i>, Feb. <i>Hamilton</i> lands troops at <i>Anzac</i> and <i>Cape Helles</i>, 25 Apr. Fresh troops landed <i>Anzac</i> and <i>Swida</i>, Aug. <i>Townshend</i> advances up Tigris towards <i>Bagdad</i>, Oct. After battle at <i>Ctesiphon</i> driven back to <i>Kut</i>, Nov.</p>
<p>1916 I. capture <i>Gorizia</i>, Aug.</p>	<p>Greek Minister <i>Venizelos</i> raises volunteers for Allies, despite opposition of <i>King Constantine</i>.</p>	<p>Galipoli finally evacuated, Jan. Capitulation of <i>Townshend</i> at <i>Kut</i>, Apr. Railway begun from <i>Suez</i> to <i>Palestine</i>: Arabs revolt against Turk (Summer).</p>
<p>1917 Failure of I. offensive towards <i>Trieste</i>, Jun.-Aug. G. and A. break through at <i>Caporetto</i>, 24 Oct. General retreat of I.; but stand on <i>Piave River</i>.</p>	<p>Constantine forced to abdicate from Gk. throne, Jun. Salonica Army strengthened, but inactive through sickness.</p>	<p>Unsuccessful attacks on <i>Gaza</i> (Spring). <i>Maude</i> advances up Tigris: wins battle at <i>Ctesiphon</i>: captures <i>Bagdad</i>, Mar. <i>Allenby</i> takes <i>Gaza</i>, Nov.; <i>Jerusalem</i>, Dec.</p>
<p>1918 I. and B. rout Austr. on <i>Piave</i>, Oct. Austr. accept armistice terms, 4 Nov.</p>	<p><i>Franchet d'Esperey</i>, commanding joint offensive, routs Bulgars, 15-30 Sep. Bulg. surrenders, 30 Sep.</p>	<p>Allenby routs Turks on plain of <i>Esdratlon</i>, 19 Sep. Reaches <i>Damascus</i>, 30 Sep.: <i>Albppo</i>, 26 Oct. Armistice accepted by Turks, 30 Oct.</p>

Asquith forms Coalition, May, 1915: Haig succeeds French, December, 1915: Robertson succeeds Kitchener, June, 1916: L.L. George succeeds Asquith, December, 1916.

XVII. THE PEACE, 1918-1921

A. Conference of Versailles: Treaty Signed 28 June, 1919

I. Punishment of Germany.

- (i) Under Armistice Terms surrender of war material and temporary occupation of Rhineland towns.
- (ii) Indemnity, ultimately fixed at £6,500,000,000.
- (iii) Loss of *Alsace-Lorraine*, part of *E. Prussia* and *Schleswig*, all her *Colonies*.

II. Redrawing of Map.

- (i) Self-determination of AUSTRIA'S subject peoples.
 - (a) *Trieste, Trentino*, and part of *Albania* to ITALY.
 - (b) *Dalmatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina* to form with Serbia and Montenegro a new JUGO-SLAV State.
 - (c) *Transylvania* to RUMANIA: *Galicja* to POLAND.
 - (d) *Bohemia* becomes independent CZECKO-SLOVAK State.
 - (e) *Hungary* independent.
- (ii) TURKS left in *Constantinople*; but cede W. Coast of *Asia-Minor* to Greece: *Syria* to France: *Palestine* and *Mesopotamia* to England under "Mandate" to League of Nations.

III. League of Nations.

- (i) Covenant incorporated in Treaty at wish of President Wilson.
- (ii) Rejected by United States.
- (iii) Flouted by Poles and others; but does much solid work.

B. Bolshevik Russia

- (i) *Lenin* and *Trotsky* gain control November, 1917: make peace with Germany, March, 1918.
- (ii) Give land to peasants: kill off bourgeoisie.
- (iii) Allies make war on Bolsheviks: (a) British expedition to *Archangel*; (b) British and French aid to *Koltchak* in *Siberia*; (c) to *Denikin* in S. Russia.
- (iv) Though Bolshevik socialistic schemes miscarry, they maintain hold on Russia.

C. England's Troubles

I. Imperial.

- (i) In India, despite concessions, Nationalists agitate for complete independence: violence at *Amritsar*.
- (ii) In Egypt we extend self-government to natives.
- (iii) In Ireland (a) Dublin rising under *Sir Roger Casement* suppressed Easter, 1916; (b) *Sinn Fein* demands complete independence and organizes reign of terror; (c) Viscount French as Viceroy: stern suppression, but reprisals prove useless; (d) "Dominion" status granted, 1921 (Autumn).

II. Domestic.

- (i) Disappointed by Conservative tendencies of Coalition Government (re-elected, Dec., 1918), extremists claim to control country's policy by "Direct Action," but get little backing from masses.
- (ii) Though country impoverished by war expenditure, workers claim wage above pre-war standard.
- (iii) Trade "slump" causes unemployment and reduction of wages: hence strikes.
- 1920 (iv) Coal miners strike; but, getting no support from railway and transport workers ("Triple Alliance"), are beaten.
- 1921 *Special Subject*: Views of President Wilson, Clemenceau, and Lloyd George.

XVIII. CHIEF EVENTS FROM 1921 TO 1927

	EUROPEAN, ETC.	HOME.	COLONIAL.
1921	Conference at Washington on Naval Disarmament.		
1922	France disappointed of Reparation payments from Germany.	(Oct.) L.L. George resigns. (Nov.) Conservative Government under Bonar Law elected with large majority.	
1923	(i) France (under Poincaré) occupies Ruhr Mining District. (ii) Mussolini threatens war on Greece.	(i) Baldwin funds American Debt. (ii) Baldwin becomes P.M. through Bonar Law's resignation. (iii) General Election on Tariff issue.	Imperial Conference: Mr. Bruce of Australia advocates Imperial Preference.
1924	(i) After fall of Poincaré, French withdraw from Ruhr. (ii) Dawes Scheme for Reparations agreed to.	(i) Labour Government under Macdonald with support of Liberals. (ii) Negotiations for trade treaty with Russia. (iii) General Election (Oct.), large Conservative majority under Baldwin.	(i) Wembley Exhibition of Imperial Products. (ii) Irish Boundary Commission.
1925	(i) Protocol for all-round alliance rejected by Britain. (ii) Locarno Pact. (iii) War between Greece and Bulgaria averted by League.	(i) Russian Treaty repudiated. (ii) Miners' strike averted by promise of subsidy and commission.	
1926	Germany's admission to League vetoed by Brazil.	(i) General strike (May). (ii) Miners hold out till Autumn.	
1927	(i) Germany admitted to League. (ii) Disarmament Conference at Geneva breaks down.	Conference begun between employers' and workers' representatives.	Simon Commission to investigate working of Dyarchy in India.

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